UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Penn Global Initiatives

End of Year Newsletter

A YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2025–2026 academic year has been a busy and impactful one for Penn Global and Global Initiatives. Progress has included marking the 10th anniversary of the Penn Wharton China Center; launching new Middle Eastern initiatives; participating in university-wide strategic planning under Penn Forward; and expanding U.S. domestic and foreign policy engagement through Global Initiatives' Diplomacy Lab programs as well as supporting the work of Penn Washington and Perry World House. The pages that follow share a selection of the stories that defined the year for Global Initiatives — partnerships strengthened, scholars welcomed, students sent abroad, and policy questions taken seriously. They are, together, a portrait of a global Penn that is more ambitious, more connected, and more impactful than ever before.

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Penn Global Seminar group visits the Parthenon, Spring, 2026

01 · LEADERSHIP & PENN FORWARD

Penn Global Leadership and Penn Forward

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE · 2025–2026

Penn Global leadership was named to lead two priority initiatives as part of the Penn Forward strategic planning and transformation effort. Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives Amy Gadsden co-chairs the global component of Penn Forward's "Extend" pillar, while Vice Provost for Global Initiatives Zeke Emanuel co-chairs the Penn AI initiative under the "Discover" pillar.

Extend – Penn Global: This Penn Global pillar redoubles Penn's engagement with the world — building a stronger international presence that expands global access to Penn education and research, while developing new platforms for partnerships and alumni engagement.

Discover – Penn AI: This Penn AI initiative positions Penn as a national leader in artificial intelligence, with policies and partnerships that convert technological innovation into measurable impact in research, care, and knowledge.

Penn Forward Co-Chairs Amy Gadsden and Zeke Emanuel with 2025 Penn Global Student Citizenship Awardee Alex Krastev (W '25)

02 · CHINA & EAST ASIA ENGAGEMENT

Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC) Annual Campus Visit

PHILADELPHIA · APRIL 13–17, 2026

Global Initiatives and PWCC staff: Bryan Dwyer, Hannah Malloy, Coco Zhang, Chris Zhang, Chris Klanieki, and Managing Director, Scott Moore

PWCC staff members Chris Zhang and Coco Zhang conducted their second annual visit to Penn's campus. During their week-long visit, Chris and Coco held over two dozen meetings, including with administrators from the School of Veterinary Medicine and the School of Dental Medicine to discuss possibilities for enhanced cooperation.

Chris and Coco also took part in trip-leader trainings led by Penn Abroad in preparation for supporting two Penn Global Seminar trips to China this May and met with International Student and Scholar Services colleagues to discuss planning for Forerunner China 2026, scheduled for Saturday, June 20 in Shanghai.

The Penn Global Initiatives team also worked with Chris and Coco on the newly established **PWCC Residency Grant Program**. Established in AY 25-26, the Residency Grant Program provides funding to Penn faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows, supporting residencies of up to ten days at PWCC.

As the first recipients of this grant, Professor Chao Guo of the School of Social Policy & Practice and Professor Charlotte Ren of the School of Arts & Sciences delivered a special presentation in June 2025 at the PWCC conference room titled, "Time Banking: Global Innovation in Elder Care – Experience and Insights from China." This presentation was part of an ongoing transnational comparative study on time banking and elder care services, which they are conducting alongside Professor John J. Dilulio, Jr. of the School of Arts & Sciences.

Professor Charlotte Ren
School of Arts and Sciences

Professor Chao Guo
School of Social Policy and Practice

Pagoda Book Handover at Weitzman School of Design

APRIL 16, 2026

Annie Liang-Zhou GFA'26 presents the Pagoda Book to Frederick Steiner, Dean and Paley Professor

On Thursday, April 16, 2026, Weitzman School of Design Master of Historic Preservation student Annie Liang-Zhou presented Dean and Paley Professor Fritz Steiner with a complete study, in high resolution photography, of the Ying County Foguang Pagoda, originally constructed in 1056 and now the last remaining intact pagoda of its kind. The book is available for students and scholars in the Architectural Archives at Weitzman and continues a long tradition of collaboration and exchange between Chinese architects and the Weitzman School of Design.

03 · MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVES

Middle East Distinguished Visiting Scholars Initiative

LAUNCHED FALL 2025

Middle East Distinguished Visiting Scholar Shay Hazkani with Penn students

Launched in Fall 2025, the Penn Global Middle East Distinguished Visiting Scholar Initiative brings senior scholars from the Middle East to Penn for semester-long residencies that integrate teaching, research, and public engagement. The initiative responds to an urgent institutional and global need: to foster rigorous, balanced, and humane scholarship and dialogue on the Middle East at a moment of profound discord.

The Initiative features four distinguished scholars: pollster and political commentator Dahlia Scheindlin, hosted by the Department of Political Science (Fall 2025); historian Shay Hazkani, hosted by the Department of History (Spring 2026); political communication scholar Amal Jamal, also hosted by the Department of Political Science (Fall 2026); and polling and survey expert Khalil Shikaki, hosted by the Annenberg School of Communication (Spring 2027). The Penn Global Middle East Distinguished Visiting Scholar Initiative is made possible by a gift from Stewart Colton (W'62) and Judy Colton.

Kalaniyot Academic Program Launch

INAUGURAL FELLOW, FALL 2026

Penn Global worked with the Penn chapter of the national Kalaniyot organization to launch the Penn Kalaniyot Academic Program. This Program provides Israeli scholars and researchers with the opportunity to strengthen academic collaboration between the United States and Israel through fellowship placements with Penn faculty. The first fellowship was awarded to Shira Hebel-Sela, a Ph.D. candidate in Psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She begins her fellowship in the fall of 2026 and is hosted by Vice Dean and Professor of Communication, Emily Falk, at the Annenberg School of Communication.

04 · DIPLOMACY & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Penn Washington Delivers Premier Policy White Paper

APRIL 30, 2026

Penn Washington was pleased to share their first white paper from Penn Washington's Global Policy Programs unit entitled, U.S. Policy Decision Points in the Middle East: 6-18 Month Outlook.

This report analyzes U.S. decision points in the Middle East over the next 6–18 months, drawing on a Penn Washington–convened discussions held under the Chatham House Rule. The convening brought together leading national security, energy, and regional experts - including voices from across the Penn community - to assess the trajectory of the U.S.–Iran war and its implications for the international order.

While individual contributions remain unattributed, the report reflects the depth and range of Penn expertise that Penn Washington is working to elevate in Washington, D.C. —connecting faculty insight to pressing global policy questions in a trusted, nonpartisan setting.

You can read and share the report here.

Penn Faculty Members Receive 2026 -2027 Fulbright Scholar Awards

May 27, 2026

Global Initiatives serves as the Fulbright Faculty Liaison for Penn faculty interested in applying for Fulbright Scholar Awards. To date, three Penn Faculty have been selected for the prestigious Fulbright Scholar Awards for the 2026-2027 academic year. Under the awards, Jae W. Song, Associate Professor of Radiology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania will conduct research in Korea; Sudev Sheth, Senior Lecturer of International Studies at the Lauder Institute will conduct research in India; and Victor Mair, Professor of Chinese Language and Literature in the School of Arts & Sciences will conduct research in Taiwan.

Fulbright U.S. Scholars are accomplished faculty, researchers, administrators, and established professionals who teach or conduct research in partnership with institutions around the world. Through these affiliations, they expand their professional networks and often seed future research, innovation, and institutional partnerships. When they return home to their campuses, labs, and classrooms, Fulbright Scholars share their experiences and insights, becoming champions of international collaboration. Many go on to host visiting scholars and inspire colleagues and students to pursue transformative opportunities abroad.

Jae W. Song
Perelman School of Medicine

Sudev Sheth
Lauder Institute

Victor H. Mair
School of Arts & Sciences

Two New Diplomacy Lab Projects with the U.S. Department of State

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025–2026

Penn faculty have been selected to lead two collaborative projects with the U.S. Department of State as part of Penn's membership in the Diplomacy Lab program, which provides a means for students to engage directly in diplomacy and foreign policy.

Penn Graduate School of Education Adjunct Associate Professor Zachary Hermann leads a project called **Achieving Sustainable Change in Security Cooperation: A Multi-Level Framework for Transformation, in partnership with the Defense Security Cooperation University**.

Marco Carrara, Penn Arts and Sciences Director of Employer Partnerships in Behavioral and Decision Sciences, leads a project on a **Conditions-Based Exit & Accountability Framework for Peacekeeping with the Bureau of International Organization Affairs**.

Professor Zachary Hermann
Graduate School of Education

Marco Carrara (SAS)
School of Arts and Sciences

05 · GRANTS & RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Penn Global Research and Engagement Grant Awards

AWARDED SPRING 2026

Penn Global is excited to announce the award of $620,000 in funding for 17 new research and engagement projects through the Penn Global Research and Engagement Grant Program.

Now in its 15th year, the program's newest cohort of projects address a wide range of topics, including access to health care, climate and environmental sustainability, education and workforce development, technological change, and the preservation of cultural heritage in conflict-affected regions.

The 17 projects are led by Principal Investigators representing six of Penn's Schools, with primary collaborators from an additional three Penn Schools. The program continues to serve as a key resource for new Principal Investigators, with more than half of this year's awardees receiving Penn Global Grant Program support for the first time.

Penn Global Dissertation Grants (PGDG) Awards

AWARDED SPRING 2026

Penn Global supports the globally oriented research of 13 doctoral students with a total of $90,000 in grants through the 2026 Penn Global Dissertation Grants Program.

Launched in 2023, the program supports Ph.D. students conducting international fieldwork and research, enabling deeper engagement with communities, archives, and datasets around the world. The program also reflects Penn Global's commitment to fostering early-career scholarship that addresses pressing global questions through interdisciplinary approaches.

The 2026 awardees conduct research spanning Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas and come from six Schools at Penn, including the School of Arts and Sciences, Weitzman School of Design, School of Engineering and Applied Science, Perelman School of Medicine, Annenberg School for Communication, and the School of Social Policy & Practice, highlighting the breadth of global research activity across the University.

Grant Program Outputs: Richter Bonaire Film

PUBLIC RELEASE · SPRING 2026

Penn Global is pleased to support the work of Professor Simon Richter and colleagues through a Global Engagement Fund grant. Dr. Richter works with Dutch Caribbean Islands to help address severe climate risks with educational videos that creatively educate the viewer/listener about the history of the islands and key, necessary conservation efforts. Professor Richter debuted his work at Perry World House on April 8, 2026 with a viewing and panel discussion.

Still from the Richter Bonaire documentary video

06 · PENN GLOBAL

Perry World House Highlights

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

Perry World House (PWH) extended the range of its programming this academic year. Across its four pillars of inquiry, democracy, climate change, security, and human rights and global justice, PWH engaged representatives **from 56 countries**. On campus, its programming drew the participation of **184 Penn faculty members from all 12 of Penn's schools**. Together these faculty **participated in 560 events**, inclusive of public and private discussions, briefings, and meetings.

Through **ten PWH conferences** Penn faculty shared their research with a diversity of policymakers, scholars, and practitioners that came from **38 countries** and represented an array of institutions**.** These proceedings brought the academic and policy communities together to discuss critical topics such as the geopolitics and finance of climate change; the future of development assistance; democratic resilience; the nexus of sanctions on corruption; freedom of expression as a human right; the global governance of artificial intelligence; military medical readiness; and the impacts of U.S. foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific theater. These conferences yielded dozens of policy reports, articles, and briefs, some of which directly informed policymakers such as the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) group of countries and the U.S. Congress.

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of Namibia addresses Perry World House audience, September 2025

This year, **23 distinguished visiting fellows represented thirteen countries**: Australia, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, Namibia, Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom, United States, Uganda, and Venezuela. PWH organized their collective **participation in some 500 events** including public discussions, faculty and student meetings, lectures, and more. Visitors included President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of Namibia; Robert Habeck, former vice chancellor of Germany; and Margot Wallström, former deputy prime minister of Sweden. Other fellows were journalists, human rights advocates, democracy activists, scholars, and leaders of the UN system.

Beyond campus, PWH offered a slate of weekly public programs that addressed global policy challenges in every region of the world. It hosted **36 public events that drew nearly 5,000 in-person and virtual attendees** and featured **panelists from 23 countries.** PWH **partnered with eighteen schools, centers, and departments** across campus to cosponsor many of these discussions. Virtual "Rapid Responses"—both written analysis and events—logged hundreds of registrants and readers, demonstrating the value of timely expert analysis. On the global policy stage, **PWH organized eighteen events in five cities—Washington, DC, New York City, Rio de Janeiro, Belém, and Munich**. These events established PWH's presence and capitalized on the availability of large policy audiences at the UN General Assembly, the UN Climate Change Conference, Munich Security Conference; and the World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings.

ISSS Highlights: Penn World Scholars Banquet and Graduation

SPRING 2026

Over the past year, ISSS has provided end-to-end support for international students and scholars—from pre-arrival engagement and leadership development to immigration advising, advocacy, and community-building initiatives. Through coordinated programming and communication, the ISSS team ensured timely guidance, strengthened belonging, and enhanced the overall student and scholar experience. ISSS staff concluded the academic year with graduation and alumni engagement events to celebrate and sustain Penn's global community.

International students at the ISSS World Scholars Banquet and Forerunner event

Penn Abroad Highlights

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

Academic year 2025–2026 was marked by consistent engagement and matriculation across all Penn Abroad programs. Fall and spring term study abroad programs, as well as the Global Research and Internship Program (GRIP), saw steady enrollment. Eighteen students are participating in Penn Abroad summer term, an increase from seven students in its inaugural 2025 term. Penn Abroad continued to fund four Penn Global Research Institutes and 20 Penn Global Seminars, the latter of which featured new locations in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam. In the fall, Penn Abroad held its annual Passport Drive and provided 34 fully funded passports to undergraduates who had never held a passport before, with priority given to students receiving financial aid. Beyond programming, Penn Abroad transitioned to a new software platform as part of its commitment to providing an accessible, user-friendly application experience for students, faculty, and staff. As Penn Abroad continues, it is accepting faculty proposals for the summer 2027–2028 and 2028–2029 Penn Global Seminars and encourages Penn faculty to take this opportunity to enrich their courses with a global travel component.

Penn Global Seminar group participates in "Lactation and Public Health Advocacy in the Dominican Republic" class.

07 · AFFILIATED CENTERS

Provost's Inaugural International Trip Marks 10 Years of Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC)

BEIJING · SPRING 2026

University Provost John L. Jackson Jr. took his first international trip as Provost to mark the 10th Anniversary of the PWCC, leading a delegation that included Dean of the Wharton School, Erika James, and Dean of the Weitzman School of Design, Fritz Steiner.

Provost John L. Jackson Jr. delivers remarks at PWCC celebration

Provost Jackson delivered remarks to a packed house of Penn alumni and friends, met with Penn students currently studying in Beijing, led a small group dinner discussion with Penn academic partners, and engaged in high-level talks with Chinese higher education leaders.

CERL Highlights

APRIL 15-16, 2026

Evolving Norms of Military Aid to Civilian Law Enforcement: Is Militarized Law Enforcement Consistent with the Rule of Law?

Together with Penn Washington, the Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law (CERL) convened a group of over 30 high-level subject matter experts from a variety of disciplines and perspectives to address the evolving use of the U.S. military to support civilian law enforcement operations at home and abroad. The conference, conducted under the Chatham House Rule, considered the increasing militarization of domestic law enforcement in the United States, the implications of *Trump v. Illinois*, presidential emergency powers and martial law, and the legal complexities surrounding the U.S. boat strikes and capture of Nicolás Maduro. In November 2025, CERL filed an amicus brief in *Trump v. Illinois* on behalf of more than 150 members of Congress in the Senate and House.

Conference participants discuss the impact of militarized law enforcement in the U.S.

The Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations Announces Fourth Fellowship Cohort (2026)

APRIL 28, 2026

The Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations was delighted to announce its fourth fellowship cohort, made up of sixteen outstanding next generation China scholars and analysts who were chosen as Project Fellows through a highly competitive process. Fellows are distributed across each of the Project's six key issue areas: National Security; Trade & Economics; Research & Education; Human Rights & Governance; Climate & Environment; and Science & Technology. Short biographies of the new Fellows, organized by their respective issue areas, are posted on the Project website at https://global.upenn.edu/future-of-us-china-relations/current-fellows/.

The Project's fourth fellowship cohort will convene from April 2026 through January 2027. Fellows will each develop a policy paper that makes concrete recommendations, grounded in their substantive area of expertise, addressing an aspect of U.S. policy towards China in one of the Project's six issue areas. Early draft papers will be workshopped on campus at the University of Pennsylvania in May, for feedback from Project alumni as well as relevant Penn experts. Fellows also will have the option to travel to China in June to engage in substantive dialogue with Chinese counterparts and conduct further research on the topics of their respective policy papers. Final versions of their policy papers and recommendations will be shared in dedicated briefings for policymakers in Washington, DC in September, and later shared with the wider

public through publication on the Project website and discussion on Project webinars and the China Studies podcast.

Penn Project on Future of U.S.-China Relations Fellows 2026

"We were fortunate to receive yet another record number of applications this year and could not be more thrilled by the expert and diverse fellowship cohort we have thereby assembled," stated Neysun Mahboubi, the Director of the Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations. "Our team is greatly looking forward to help develop and further amplify this outstanding cohort's recommendations for U.S.-China policy in the months and year ahead."

Amy Gadsden, Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania added, "The fourth cohort of Penn Project fellows join a thriving community of scholars and analysts who are focused on addressing the most important and complicated issues in the U.S.-China relationship. The University of Pennsylvania remains committed to the study and teaching of China, and the Penn Project enables valuable opportunities for our students and faculty to engage with the next generation of experts shaping the China field now and into the future."

The Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations, an initiative of Penn Global, is supported by Penn's China Research & Engagement Fund, the Henry Luce Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Ford Foundation. Additional information is available at https://global.upenn.edu/future-of-us-china-relations/

Looking Ahead

The stories in this review represent a small part of what Penn Global, its partners, and the wider Penn community accomplished in 2025–2026. As we look toward the year ahead, we remain committed to building a global Penn that meets this moment — one in which thoughtful international engagement, principled scholarship, and durable partnerships matter more than ever. We invite you to keep in touch and to partner with us in the year ahead.

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