Dear Colleagues:

Welcome back to another great year at Penn. We hope that you all enjoyed a relaxing and stimulating summer break.

Last week, as you may know, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that graduate students at private universities will be allowed to unionize. This decision, which has been expected for some time, may lead to unionization activities on our campus.

We believe strongly that our graduate students are our students, mentees, and future colleagues rather than our employees. We are also very proud of the work we have done in collaboration with our graduate students and their elected leadership in enhancing every aspect of graduate student life at Penn. This effort has been especially energetic since 2004, when we devoted the campus-wide self-study of Middle States reaccreditation to graduate education and implemented several major initiatives as a result of what we learned.

At the same time, we support the thoughtful deliberations appropriate to a university campus, which may in themselves produce new ideas for improving graduate student life in the future. To this end, the University has prepared three resources:

- A webpage of Frequently Asked Questions and answers about unionization: https://provost.upenn.edu/education/graduate/faq
- A webpage of guidelines for faculty about unionization: https://provost.upenn.edu/faculty/current/guidelines
- A website that explains the benefits and programs available to graduate students at Penn: http://www.upenn.edu/pages/valuing-grad-students

We encourage you to visit these websites and refer others to them as needed. We also emphasize the need to safeguard open expression about unionization. This is especially important for faculty members who supervise, mentor, or advise graduate students. The NLRB offers the acronym TIPS to remind us that at no time should anyone Threaten, Interrogate, Promise anything to, or Spy on graduate students as they are engaged in this process.

We are grateful, as ever, for your work in sustaining the high level of graduate student teaching and learning at Penn, and we look forward to more conversations in the year ahead.