Dear Neighbors,

Fall has arrived and so have Princeton’s newest undergraduates and graduate students. The Class of 2027 is among our largest and most diverse, ensuring Princeton in the midst of a four-year expansion that will increase our undergraduate population by 500 students. This institution in evolution of our transfer program with a focus on enrolling veterans, military college, and non-traditional students.

By expanding the undergraduate class and providing the most generous aid program in the country, we can give more talented students from all backgrounds the benefit of a Princeton education.

More providing opportunities for more students was a goal set by the Board of Trustees in the strategic planning framework. Established in 2016, the framework “guides the University’s ongoing efforts to enhance our core commitments to excellence in teaching and research and to such bedrock principles as affordability, diversity, inclusivity and service.” This past June, the board adopted its second update to the framework, reaffirming the liberal arts that encompasses engineering and science.

The Center brings together a nation-leading constellation of initiatives in college access and opportunity, including the Freshman Scholars Institute (FSI), the Scholars Institute Fellows Program (SIFP), the University’s Programs for Transfer, Non-Traditional and Veterans Students, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, the Princeton University Preparatory Program (PSJP), and the Princeton Summer Journalism Program (PSJP).

It also serves as a hub for research and innovation in the field of college access and success, and, through a partnership with the FS&I consortium, informs and strengthens similar efforts at colleges and universities across the country.

Two years after a gift from Bloomberg, the Princeton Center for Access and Opportunity, and the Center’s work supporting the success of first-generation, lower-income, veteran and transfer students.

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The Emma Bloomberg Center’s establishment in April 2021 brought together Princeton’s pioneering initiatives in college access and opportunity. Its programs support the increasing number of Princeton undergraduates who are entering college as first-generation and lower-income (FLI) students, as well as veterans, transfer and non-traditional students.

Walk your wheels: New PEV policy on University pathways

A s of late August, personal electronic vehicles (PEVs) — including electric scooters, hovemoovers, bicycles, skateboards and similar rides — must be walked or carried on campus pathways on week- days between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., the University announced on Aug. 18. The restriction covers most of campus, from Nassau Street to Witherspoon Street, and from University Place and Alexander Street on the west to the EQuad and Stadium Drive gauge on the east.

The policy does not affect motorized wheelchair or non-motorized vehicles like traditional bicycles and skateboards.

Other key details:

- PEVs are still strongly discouraged on public roads such as Alexander Street and Washington Road, and the announcement included a reminder that all wheeled vehicles are prohibited on most sidewalks in downtown Princeton.
- After hours and around the perimeter of campus, the pathway speed limit is 10 mph.

Save-the-date!

Annual Veterans Day observance

9 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10
University Chapel
All are welcome.

Romus Broadway summer camp inspires youngsters through the art of photography

F or two weeks over the summer, seven young people curious about exploring their world through a new lens attended the Romus Broadway summer photography camp held on the campus of Princeton University.

The free, open-to-all camp was named in honor of Romus Broadway, who with his camera documented life in Princeton’s historically Black Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood from the 1950s into the early 2000s. The Princeton University Library acquired his photo collection not long after he died in 2020.

On weekdays from June 20 to June 30, the photo campers met at Princeton’s Carl A. Fields Center to learn the basics of photography, including composition, lighting, and more.

Continued on page 2
Tax economist Zidar says it’s his job to give you the best numbers, not the convenient ones

Princeton Professor Owen Zidar, a 2020 recipient of the prestigious Alfred D. Wal前后er research award, has produced an impressive portfolio of work that highlights the dynamics of wealth and inequality in America, and how tax policies at the local, state, and national levels can influence those dynamics.

"Whether you’re talking about income or wealth, we know that inequality is growing, and understanding these disparities is a big motivator of my work," Zidar said. "Disparities in opportunity are not only problematic in terms of fairness, but also in terms of overall economic prosperity."

In a major paper in the Quarterly Journal of Economics last fall, Zidar and his co-authors estimated that Americans in the top 1% of the wealth distribution have on average $11 million in wealth, while Americans in the top 0.1% have $50 million.

"If we want to understand what we can do about inequality, we have to first understand why it’s increasing," said Zidar. "And one of the biggest misconceptions people have is that the richest Americans are all Wall Street stockbrokers, coal company owners, or inventors in Silicon Valley."

In another paper, also published in the Quarterly Journal of Economics, Zidar and co-authors showed that, contrary to popular belief, most of the people in the top 0.1% earn their money by owning privatized "pass-through" businesses where the business income is passed on to the owner and taxed as personal income.

Their pass-through businesses are typically marketed in size, earning less than $50 million in profits a year and employing about 75 people. The owners aren't living on Fifth Avenue or nailing Big Tech conglomerates. They own the car dealership down the street or the food company the next town over.

"The nature of the rich is quite important for thinking about how they might respond to different policies," said Zidar. "If we want to raise capital gains taxes and the typical rich person is Elon Musk, then we might expect those people to react in a certain way, making changes to how they hold their wealth, and that will affect how much money we ultimately raise."

After understanding who the multi-millionaires are changes the calculation about which policies might be most effective at bringing in revenue.

"If we tell you what you want to hear rather than the truth, things won’t work out well for anyone," says Princeton’s Owen Zidar. Photo by Daniel Shearer.

In another paper, written with Princeton Ph.D. student Ole Agersnap, Zidar showed that an increase in the capital gains rate would raise far more revenue than most people expect. Ultimately, Zidar says, a focus on raising capital taxes and closing loopholes for private business owners might also be much easier to enforce than some other recent tax proposals.

Speaking to the role of economists, Zidar called an American Economic Review essay by Nobel Laureate Esther Duflo that argues economists should approach their work like plumbers — as technicians committed to understanding how a policy will play out before implementing it.

"I think Duflo’s absolutely right," said Zidar. "I think of economists as engineers. If you want to build a bridge, it’s our job to give you the best numbers, tell you what’s possible, and give a sense of what problems may arise and what is likely to happen in the real world. I tell you what you want to hear rather than the truth, things won’t work out well for anyone."

The oldest of six siblings, Zidar was born in Chicago but spent his childhood moving around the Midwest for his father’s job as a salesman with Burlington Northern Railroad. In 2000, the family moved to Houston when another company Zidar’s father worked for was bought by Enron. A year later, Enron experienced one of the most dramatic and scandalous corporate bankruptcies in history.

Ultimately, Zidar says, his dad’s job was "collateral damage" to the scandal, and the experience showed him how a single company can marly help or hurt a community and its people.

After high school, Zidar enrolled at Dartmouth College, where an early love of philosophy and debate quickly transitioned into a passion for economics. "I took an economics class in the spring of my freshman year and thought: ‘Wow, this is how I think.’"

He earned his bachelor’s degree in economics from Tulane University and his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. In the second year of his Ph.D. program, Zidar had the opportunity to work for President Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers, helping to provide the president with economic insights and analysis. As a staff economist, he was assigned to several projects related to tax changes, trying to understand the best way for the government to help homeowners facing record foreclosures.

"It was an intense debate, and different groups had different views," said Zidar. "But I remember being amazed at the scale of how many millions of people would be helped by the right policy, either by getting more money or staying in their homes longer. That’s the type of thing that makes it easy to get up in the morning and work hard."

Whatever policies we pursue, Zidar says, the most important thing is that we study them thoroughly and understand their implications. "Most of the time, we have the data and the methods to understand whether a policy we favor will play out the way we want," he said.

"This work allows us to take advantage of those tools and pay attention to what the research says."

Delaney Parish, Department of Economics

Romus Broadway camp

Participants assembled photo collages, in homage to Romus Broadway, Photo by Dan Day

Contributions to our community

For the seventh year, the Office of Community and Regional Affairs partnered with WS, Mason to offer Princeton University employees the opportunity to purchase a backpack kit, which included books, notebooks, pens, rulers and markers, for the annual Princeton University Services’ School Supply Drive to benefit economically disadvantaged Princeton schoolchildren. This year, staff from the Whitney/Young Contracting Company who are working on campus construction projects were also invited to donate to the drive, which collected a total of 325 backpacks.


The 2023 backpack drive collected 325 backpacks. Photo by Kevin Birch

The backpacks will be distributed by Room Service and may be purchased by students at the Princeton University Library's digital repository.

Dan Day, Office of Communications
University expands community internship involvement

This summer, Princeton University welcomed six interns from the community to positions on campus: two at Firestone Library, and one each at the Art Museum offices, Campus Recreation, Facilities and the Pace Center’s Community House.

"That internship gave me valuable insight into all the possibilities a library science career can provide," said Asha Chukumba of Trenton, who is entering her senior year at Johns Hopkins University. "Getting the chance to speak and work with so many different librarians provided me with amazing advice and experiences to put towards my next steps into graduate school and beyond."

The young people obtained their positions through Princeton University’s partnership with the Princeton Human Services Summer Youth Employment Program and the Trenton Mayor’s Youth Workforce & Career Training Program, part of the Milhlich Child & Family Development Center.

These programs support teens and college students with job readiness workshops, interviewing skills and resumes, to help place the students in summer internships.

Prior to this year, the University had hosted two interns at Firestone Library for several summers. This was the first year the program expanded beyond the library.

"We were excited to provide more opportunities on campus this year," said Melissa Mercuro, associate director for community relations in the University’s Office of Community and Regional Affairs. "As the University returned to full operations post-COVID, we reached out to additional campus partners and were excited by the positive response we received to hosting interns in their departments. We hope to continue to expand the program in coordination with our community and campus partners in future years."

"This program is an excellent opportunity for interns to become familiar with the varied career opportunities both at Princeton University and in higher education," said Kristin Appelget, assistant vice president for community and regional affairs. "We hope that for some of these students, the summer internship sparks an interest that leads to a career in higher education later in life."

"That internship gave me valuable skills that I used this job through a training program and nonprofit organization called Puppets Behind Bars. Starting when I was just a tiny eight-week-old puppy, I was learning and preparing for my future role. I was trained by incarcerated individuals who taught me and loved me, and I got to go on outings that helped me explore the world! All of this was done to make sure I would be a perfect fit for this role and be able to provide the best support I could.

How do you get this job and how long have you been at the University? I was 18 months old when I graduated from the program. Yay! In July of 2021, I began a two-week program that was designed to teach me with a perfect partner. Lucky me, I ended up getting the best placement, Princeton University, with my new, Detective Sergeant Alvan Flanders. August 6, 2021, was the start of work in the Department of Public Safety. The rest is history.

What can dogs do better than humans? They are my biggest advocate and cheerleader for the work I do around campus. Plus, they're the first to give me belly rubs in the morning and head pats at night.

What do cats do better than humans? I love unconditionally.

What is your position on cats – tigers in particular? Do squirrels? I am definitely a fan of big cats, and I was very happy to become a Princeton Tiger! I love sporting my Tiger pride any chance I get. Squirrels – I can take or leave them.

What is your favorite dog treat? Mmm. Kibble and maybe an ice cube to cool down during the dog days of summer.

Come visit us at PPPL

Get behind-the-scenes looks at a national laboratory and learn how scientists are creating the energy of the future at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, managed by Princeton University.

Tours are led by trained tour guides who are working scientists, engineers, technicians, Science Education staff, and graduate students. Most include visits to our laboratories and experiments, including the National Spherical Torus Experiment Upgrade (NSTX-U), if available.

Public tours are held every Friday of most months at 11 a.m. You must register in advance. Go to www.pppl.gov and click on the “Engage with Us” tab for sign-up information and other details. We also offer weekly colloquia on general public, which begins again in the winter of 2024. Tours are led by trained tour guides who are working scientists, engineers, technicians, Science Education staff, and graduate students.

Emilia Aronson and Jamie Saxon, Office of Communications

Photo courtesy of Avan Flanders

Q: What has been your most shining moment on the job? Shortly after I started the job, my skills were put to the test when my partner and I were called to support a student who was having a tough time adjusting to campus life. We went to the infirmary to visit the student. When I arrived, I knew just what to do. I went right over and lay next to the student, who responded to me and talked to me a bit. I sensed a lift in the student’s mood. Later I found out that the student had a dog at home.

Seeing the difference that my presence was able to make made me excited to be a positive force on campus.

More recently, I was thrilled to have my impact recognized by the Class of 1962, who inducted me as an honorary class member during Reunions in May.

Q: Do you rely on any special canine skills – or skills beyond human capabilities – to assist you in your work? I am a therapy dog with DPS.

Q: What do you like best about being a therapy dog? It is incredibly rewarding to see the positive impact I have on this community. Seeing the difference that my presence is able to make makes my work so meaningful and fulfilling. I am so grateful to be able to provide comfort and support to those in need.

Q: How do your human colleagues support you? My human colleagues love to put me in the spotlight, which I love too! They are my biggest advocates and cheerleaders for the work I do around campus. Plus, they're the first to give me belly rubs in the morning and head pats at night.

Q: What do you do when you are not on the job? When I am not on the job, I enjoy spending time with my fave, Detective Sergeant Alvan Flanders. We love going on outings together that help me explore the world! All of this was done to make sure I would be a perfect fit for this role and be able to provide the best support I could.

Q: What is your favorite dog treat? I love kibble and an occasional ice cube to cool down during the dog days of summer.

Q: What do you do when you have a bad day? I rest my head on a student’s lap or fall asleep in a student’s arms. I love making people feel better.

Q: What do you do when you are not working? I enjoy exploring the campus and going on outings together with my human colleagues.

Q: What is your favorite dog treat? I love kibble and ice cubes to cool down during the dog days of summer.
LENS supports new paid summer service internships

Every Princeton undergraduate now has the opportunity to participate in a paid service internship over the summer through the University Initiative called Learning and Education through Service (LENS).

Princeton provides funding that allows the students to spend a summer focused on service and social impact work that engages with communities beyond campus. Internships may be completed in the summer following a student’s first, sophomore or junior year.

This summer’s LENS summer service internships served across the country and the globe. Here are some who chose to make their impact locally:

Tableta Amurane, Class of 2026, Economics, focused on streamlining operations and coordinating volunteers for the Princeton-based nonprofit Share My Meals, through the Center for Career Development’s Summer Social Impact Internship ($1800 Fund).

Share My Meals works to alleviate food insecurity and mitigate the environmental impact of food waste. Amurane helped improve volunteer engagement by developing strategies for volunteer recruitment, communication and retention. She also collaborated with colleagues in the organization’s operations sector to streamline processes for efficiency.

“As someone deeply interested in the nonprofit sector, and with aspirations of potentially starting my own in the future, I found this role incredibly enticing,” she said, “Bringing a part of an organization with such a great cause has been incredibly fulfilling.”

Seyoung Chung, Class of 2023, History, focused on designing, teaching and evaluating workshops for educators training at Princeton-Blairstown Center, through the RISE (Recognizing Inequities and Stoming for Equality) fellowship program.

Established in 1908, the Princeton-Blairstown Center provides adventure-based, experiential education to youth from historically marginalized communities. Chung led lessons in college and career preparation, and collaborated on curriculum development.

“I’ve always been interested in the field of education,” he said, and the LENS summer internship enabled him “to truly, directly, charge a life for the better, and be a witness to this growth.”

Edward Klevens, Class of 2026, Computer Science, assisted a campus promulgating midway at the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute, as a RISE fellow.

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute’s mission is to improve the safety, quality and affordability of health care in the state.

Klevens conducted research and analysis to support the design of a midlevel campaign aimed at a wide range of stakeholders as a part of the organization’s efforts to address racial disparities in material and infant health.

“The aim of our project is to find the most effective ways to inform, educate, and raise awareness,” Klevens said. “I have gained valuable insights into community-building and the role each individual plays.”

Aritra Hassan, Class of 2026, Computer Science, used data science to improve software for health care and social service providers with patients and families to help improve outcomes and reduce health care costs. Hassan focused on the software’s technical aspects and data analytics to best serve the needs of Amrison’s partners.

“This opportunity perfectly combined my interests of working in software development and making an impact in any way I could. So I am very happy that I am a part of,” Hassan said, “I believe that technology’s presence in our lives will only get stronger, and that I can and should be used to assist people in need.”

Fiber arts project blossoms into ‘Blooming’ displays in town

I f you visit the Arts Council of Princeton or Princeton Public Library this spring — or just stroll by — you may have seen the yarn balls “blooming” with an installation of flowers crafted from yarn, transforming the entranceways into colorful bowers of blossoms and leaves.

Every blossom in these magical creations was created by a Princeton community member as part of an outreach project called “Blooming: A Fiber Arts Display,” spearheaded by the University’s Office of Community and Regional Affairs (OCRA) and women’s employee resource group (WERG). Gina Mastro, program manager for educational outreach in OCRA and a passionate crocheter, hatched the idea during the pandemic, when one and several members of WERG met weekly on Zoom — calling themselves the Knot Stress Away group — to share and create yarn projects with one another, socialize and destress.

Mastro was inspired by Magda Suyin, a boutique owner in Austin, Texas, who started the street art sensation known as yarn-bombing, or sometimes yarn-storming. “Knitted, crocheted or other fiber creations are placed over stationary objects in urban environments such as statues, trees, benches, bridges and bicycle posts, creating a whimsical and inviting look,” Mastro said.

When the Knot Stress Away group mounted their installation on Firestone Plaza East in late May, passersby regularly stopped to take photos of themselves in front of the artistic wonders, which included a huge flower cape — designed by Vanessa Gonzalez-Perez, a former assistant dean in the Graduate School — and a bicycle embroidered by Irena Staniszczewska-Gorzelacz, senior laboratory safety specialist in the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

To bring “Blooming” into town, Mastro and co-organizer Susan Lappi, executive assistant to the vice president for information technology, invited the Arts Council and the public library to create installations, too. Melissa Kusen, marketing/program manager, and Maria Evans, artistic director, at the Arts Council, and Janie Herrmann, the library’s wait programming manager, organized workshops with community members, The library’s own knit and crochet group, the ST, Daniel the King Prayer Shawl Ministry in Princeton Junction, the Meetup.com Knot Stress Away group and the Community Circle of HomeFront also contributed.

“The Boro was so excited about its idea that they want to expand onto Nassau Street next spring,” Mastro said. “Our group of 18 crofters plus the community contributors had a very productive time working on this project, it was a breath of fresh air in our day.”

Walk your wheels: New PEV policy

Continued from page 1

• When used as traditional bicycles, e-bikes may be used on campus pathways at any time.

• After monitoring the policy in action, the University will make updates as needed in October.

Molly Seltzer, Office of Communications

Also new: A navigation app for campus

The University also rolled out a new walking app, a Waze- or Google Maps-like tool to show people the quickest way to their destination, whether on foot or by bike. See the link for the Princeton Campus Map where you get your app.

Campus visitors will also find temporary walking only signage for deviances with temporary routes around construction areas.

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The policy covers pathways on much of the Princeton Campus. Map courtesy of Princeton Facilities

Community Connections

Princeton University’s Office of Community and Regional Affairs is pleased to send this publication to our neighbors with information about the many ways the University and the local community interact. Questions? Email us at prcai@princeton.edu or call 609-258-2304.