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## **Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting on June 10, 2008**

The first regularly scheduled meeting of GAPSA Executive Board was convened on June 10, 2008 at 6:12 PM in the second floor conference room of the Graduate Student Center.

Present were: Andrew Rennekamp, Sarah Smith, Alexandra Kotsovos, Nikki Thorpe, Saurabh Madaan, Alejandro Hagan, Christa Heyward Vicky Doan-Nguyen

Also present via teleconference were: Mat Abramsky and Esther Agbaje.

### **Summary of Robert's Rules Call to Order**

GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp handed out a pamphlet regarding Robert's Rules Call to Order. He explained that these rules will be used in future General Assembly meetings, but will not be as strictly enforced during GAPSA Executive Board meetings. In addition, Mr. Rennekamp gave examples of how the rules work. For example, if the Chair makes a decision and a General Assembly representative believes the decision to be unfair, then the member can appeal to the decision of the Chair and this would require a vote. Also, Robert's Rules includes provisions to call to orders of the day to remain on task by following the meeting's agenda. If a member puts forth a motion to adjourn, he may do this at any time; however, the motion must pass. If more than one person makes a motion at the same time, the motion that takes precedence is the one that appears further up in the chart. A guide to using Robert's Rules was distributed and will be emailed out to the Executive Board members. Mr. Rennekamp requested any feedback concerning the use of Robert's Rules during the General Assembly meetings.

### **Call to Order**

GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp explained the rough structure of the meetings and what the call to order means. He explained that the Chair will state that the meeting is in session.

### **Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum**

Only two members were absent however quorum was attained.

### **Approval of the Minutes from Prior Meetings**

There were no minutes from prior meetings.

### **Reports**

GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp explained that Executive Board members will give reports during both Executive Board meetings and General Assembly meetings. The order of the reports will follow

the order of the positions listed in the GAPSA constitution. Mr. Rennekamp stated that if a member has nothing to report, then this is not a problem. However, if the report includes a topic that can be dealt with in a one-on-one meeting, then the Chair will suggest another time for discussion.

### *Chair's Report*

GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp stated he will keep the Executive Board informed of hiring within the administration. Mr. Rennekamp stated that a new Chaplain has been found. Rev. Charles (Chas) Howard will take over as the University Chaplain. The new Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs will be Ajay Nair. In addition, the Dental School Dean is stepping down and Dr. Thomas Sollecito will act as the interim Dean. A new PhD program in Africana studies is being offered. In addition, there is a new Dean at the Design School. Vice Chair for Student Life Nikki Thorpe also pointed out that Marilyn Taylor will take over as the new Dean of the School of Design.

### GAPSA Executive Board Meeting Schedule

The Executive Board retreat will be held from August 8 through August 10. Every Executive Board member is required to attend. The President's Reception will be held on September 3, 2008. Mr. Rennekamp would like all Executive Board members to attend this event. Immediately following this event, the kickoff GAPSA event of the semester will be held at Strikes. The Executive Board members must be available to assist ticket sales during the Strikes event. Mr. Rennekamp also handed out the schedule for future Executive Board and General Assembly meetings. One correction to note is that the September 3, 2008 Executive Board meeting will be cancelled due to the President's Reception.

### Trustee Meeting Schedule / Appointment of Exec members to Trustee Committees

The Trustees will be meeting next Thursday and Friday. GAPSA has six seats on six different committees. The GAPSA Chair sits on the Budget and Finance Committee. Traditionally the Vice Chair of Student Life sits on the Committee on Student Life and the Facilities and Campus Planning Committee. The Vice Chair of Research Students sits on the Academic Policy Committee. A graduate or professional student may not sit on a trustee committee if they have ever sat on one previously. First Vice Chair Alejandro Hagan volunteered to sit on the Neighborhood Initiatives Committee. The External Affairs Committee involves governmental interaction and lobbying and is chaired by NBC reporter Andrea Mitchell. The External Affairs Committee seat is currently vacant and will be filled in the near future rather than rushing the nomination process.

### Online Ticketing

GAPSA has received permission to use online ticketing from the website [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com). To use this service, there is an overhead charge but the fee is minimal. For example, to sell a ticket for 4.89, the fee would be 1.11. As the price of the ticket increases, the fee charged is a much smaller percentage of the whole. This fee is reasonable and students would most likely be willing to pay one extra dollar to not have to travel to the Graduate Student Center to purchase event tickets. Links to online ticketing would be posted on the GAPSA website.

### GAPSA-Provost Award Reception

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The GAPSA-Provost Award Reception is tentatively scheduled for October 2nd. It is critical for Vicky and Mat to attend.

#### Meeting with the President

The fall meeting with the President is tentatively scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Gutmann meets with GAPSA once a semester.

#### Ivy Summit Dates

The Ivy Summit will be held in Cambridge. GAPSA will send six representatives to this meeting. The summit will be held from October 24-26, 2008. This is an all expenses paid weekend. Discussion concerning this will follow in the near future.

#### *First Vice Chair's Report*

##### Report on the Leadership Retreat

First Vice Chair Alejandro Hagan spoke with Fran concerning the Leadership Retreat surveys. Participants of the retreat listed activities they enjoyed but also commented on activities to change. Mr. Hagan will meet with Fran in June or July to discuss the survey results and how to structure future retreats. However, the retreat was a success and GAPSA will host a fall retreat depending on the budget. GAPSA spent well under 15,000 and Val allotted GAPSA 15,000 per year. This past retreat cost approximately 8-9,000. To host two retreats in one year will cost more than 15,000 but Mr. Hagan will draft a budget.

##### Report on Planning for the Exec Board Retreat

Mr. Hagan is planning the Executive Board retreat. It is clear that the members do not wish to attend the hostel again this year. Last year, 1000 was spent on the Executive Board retreat. Fellowship Farm costs 75 dollars per person per night and this only includes accommodation. The cost increases if an activities center or meeting space is required. Vice Chair of Finance Christa Heyward suggested a friend's beach house as a location for the Executive Board retreat and she will look into this further. Mr. Hagan welcomes any ideas concerning the location of the Executive Board retreat.

##### Report on GradFest

Attendance at GradFest this year was increased compared to last year; however, total attendance was still low. This could be due to lack of an open bar or happy hour. However, GradFest is one of the few family friendly events on campus and it is important to keep that aspect. Some suggestions were to shorten the day, make the day more dynamic, and have a more social open bar. Some attendees did not like the catering service, stating the caterer was disorganized. Some attendees commented on the lack of a link between the fun shops and the happy hour, especially for those people who did not participate in the Quizzo event. Other suggestions were to hire a professional DJ with varied styles of music. The sponsors along the walkway felt distant from the main activities. Anita is attempting to get a fellowship for GradFest so GAPSA will have sustainable funding. This will allow the Vice Chair to focus on other aspects of planning GradFest rather than hunting for funds. Despite the fact

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that GradFest occurs when many students are preparing for finals and graduation, the date of GradFest cannot be easily changed due to many other events that take place on Penn's campus during the year.

*Vice Chair for Research Students' Report*

Appointment of Reps to the Graduate Council of the Faculties

Vice Chair for Research Students Vicky Doan-Nguyen stated that two positions need to be filled on the Graduate Council of the Faculties. Brian is the Chair of BGAPSA and will be one of the representatives. However, the other position is vacant. Suggestions of any non-SAS and non-Medical research students would be greatly appreciated. Ms. Doan-Nguyen will be contacting individual school executive boards for suggestions or nominations.

*Vice Chair for Professional Students' Report*

Vice Chair for Professional Students Mat Abramsky stated that a few students are interested in summer travel grants. However, these students were told to wait until the fall semester. There are no deadlines for professional student travel grants. Deadlines only exist for research student travel grants.

*Vice Chair for International Students' Report*

Vice Chair for International Students Saurabh Madaan met with the Chair of OAP and will be involved in the New Student Orientation. Mr. Madaan will be coordinating this in the coming weeks.

*Vice Chair for Equity & Access's Report*

Vice Chair for Equity & Access Esther Agbaje updated the list of committees. Ms. Agbaje will give members reappointments if requested. Ms. Agbaje also stated that if anyone wants to add additional questions to the committee applications to send these questions to her. This applies if an Executive Board member will be chairing a University Committee, GradFest, International Council, etc., and even if a Board member wishes to appoint a deputy. There will be one universal application using Survey Monkey. The applicant will be able to click on which committees they would like to join and the website will take them to various questions. If the Board members wish to view last year's online application, Ms. Agbaje will make this available and everyone will be able to view this until the end of this week.

*Vice Chair for Finance's Report*

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### Update on GAPSA Budget

Vice Chair for Finance Christa Heyward stated that she will send out last years' position's final budgets. The exact amounts were not reported well and thus are unknown. The numbers are close but not exact. Ms. Heyward needs every Executive Board member to send her a proposed budget by July 31<sup>st</sup>. The GAPSA Executive Board must set a total proposed budget before September.

Ms. Heyward also met with Lynn and discussed how best to document GAPSA's incoming funds from ticket sales and what GAPSA spends. The funds don't always reconcile with way it shows up on Lynn's forms. Only the Vice Chair of Finance and the Vice Chair of Operations will have procards this year. This is due to the fact that it is difficult for our administrator to keep track of multiple procards.

Food can be ordered for committee meetings as long as it is included in the specific Vice Chair's budget and the budget is approved. Or the specific Vice Chair can order food with his or her own credit card and get reimbursed which takes approximately three weeks.

### Allocation of Funding to School Student Governments

The General Assembly decided to have two distributions of funds, one in the summer and one following. The downside is that it could be confusing for the individual schools. Mr. Rennekamp informed the Executive Board that since the last General Assembly meeting GAPSA has been given more flexibility from the administration in terms of when the school funds can be transferred. There is now no deadline by which summer transfers need to be accomplished. Mr. Rennekamp also explained that the administration has given GAPSA all the school census data needed to for GAPSA to determine the new funding allocations. The proposed allocations were distributed to the Board members and discussed at length.

GAPSA has all of the numbers it needs to come up with a new funding formula. These numbers are confidential. The funding that GAPSA receives and distributes is based on the amount of money students pay into the general fee pot. Full time, part time, and PhD non dissertation students only used to pay the general fee. Now the dissertating students pay the general fee. When GAPSA and GSAC merged the professional schools lobbied GAPSA to rewrite the funding formula to reflect the paying contribution of student types. Now the formula is adjusted to include dissertating students. The School of Arts and Sciences have the majority of dissertating students, followed by the Graduate School of Education. GAPSA should continue to provide its services to all students not just to students paying the general fee. Schools that have a bigger percentage of students paying into general fee have a higher percentage going back to the individual school. The schools hardest hit are Dental and Nursing. Their funding is going down since their students are contributing less money total to general fee pot.

First Vice Chair Alejandro Hagan put forth a motion that the Board approve the new allocation formula (based on FTE\*), transfer the funding to the individual schools in the full amount, with the caveat that the final decision be approved by the General Assembly, as per the GAPSA constitution. Vice Chair for Professional Students Mat Abramsky seconded the motion. Mr. Hagan added an amendment to the motion that Vice Chair of Professional Students Mat Abramsky and Vice

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Chair for Research Students Vicky Doan-Nguyen be contacts listed in the letter. This amendment was accepted by the seconder, Mr. Abramsky. Mr. Hagan also added an amendment that a deadline of July 1<sup>st</sup> be instated for the letter to be sent to the individual school governments. This amendment was accepted by the seconder, Mr. Abramsky. Mr. Hagan motioned for a vote and Vice Chair of Communications Alexandra Kotsovos seconded.

Motion passes unanimously

The letter will go to school student governments, to the Deans of the schools, to the Graduate Student Life Associate Deans and to the Business Administration. The letter must come from GAPSA since this is a GAPSA decision.

#### *Vice Chair for Student Life's Report*

Vice Chair for Student Life Nikki Thorpe had nothing to report.

#### *Vice Chair for Social Activities' Report*

##### Philly Fringe Festival Event

Vice Chair for Social Activities Jessica Kim was not present but GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp filled in for her. GAPSA is in talks with Live Arts Philly Fringe Festival. This event would take place on September 5<sup>th</sup>. GAPSA would provide discount tickets and a happy hour afterwards where attendees would be able to interact with performers and directors.

#### *Vice Chair for Social Programs' Report*

Vice Chair for Social Programs Christina Arlt was not present.

#### *Vice Chair for Communications' Report*

##### Update on Exec Board Business Cards

Vice Chair for Communications Alexandra Kotsovos stated that the Executive Board's business cards will be coming in any day.

##### Update on the GAPSA Website

The GAPSA website is up to date. The website looks different, however, but any feedback is welcomed. Updating the website is proving to be more difficult than originally thought. Comments on and constructive criticism of the website is welcome.



*Vice Chair for Operations's Report*

Vice Chair for Operations Sarah Smith had nothing to report.

**Follow-up Questions on Reports**

None

**Follow-up Action on Reports**

Previously completed

**Special Orders**

None

**Points of Information**

Handouts were passed out and electronic copies will be sent concerning Points of Information.

**New Business**

Vice Chair of Professional Students Mat Abramsky requested to add to next meeting's agenda the topic of the GAPSAs surplus and ways to approach it.

**Announcements**

None

**Adjournment**

First Vice Chair Alejandro Hagan put forth a motion to adjourn. GAPSAs Chair Andrew Rennekamp seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.