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To: Brenda Brand, Office of the Secretary  
From: Andrew J. Rennekamp, GAPSA Chair  
Date: September 18, 2008  
Re: GAPSA University Council Status Report for September 24, 2008

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### **GAPSA Conference Travel Grants (2007-2008)**

In 2007-2008, the Graduate the Professional Student Assembly awarded a total of \$45,705 in international and domestic travel grants to support more than 160 research and professional students as they presented their work and represented Penn at academic conferences around the globe.

### **Funding for the Graduate Student Center (2007-2008)**

In April 2008, the Graduate the Professional Student Assembly gave \$10,000 in funding to the Graduate Student Center toward the purchase of a new AV system and an additional \$3,000 in funding to repaint the first floor common area. Together with the \$15,000 grant for the “Navigating Series” GAPSA gave a total of \$28,000 to the Graduate Student Center in FY2008.

### **GradFest (Spring 2008)**

GAPSA held its second annual “GradFest” celebration on May 3, 2008. The event included carnival games, school-sponsored “fun shops,” a BBQ lunch catered by Tommy Gunns, a Meet & Greet reception in the Hall of Flags and the annual GAPSA “Spirit of Philadelphia” boat cruise. More than 1,000 graduate and professional students purchased tickets, and GAPSA raised nearly \$20,000 in cooperate sponsorship dollars and an estimated \$22,650 in in-kind donations. Major sponsors included Bank of America, Bed Bath & Beyond, American Airlines, 4300 Spruce Street Condos, Domus, Penn Dining and Yahoo! More information can be found on the GradFest website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/engage/gradfest>

### **GAPSA Leadership Retreat (Spring 2008)**

On May 20, 2008, GAPSA, the Office of Student Life, and the Vice Provost of University Life held the first “GAPSA Leadership Retreat” designed to strengthen leadership skills among graduate and professional students. The three-day retreat was held in Pottstown, PA and run by some of the best Penn staff facilitators. Through exploring different facets of effective leadership, through problem solving with one another, and by engaging in various training exercises, approximately 40 graduate and professional students developed a deep understanding of leadership styles, skills, and presence.

### **GAPSA-Provost Award for Interdisciplinary Innovation (Summer 2008)**

Over the past three months, GAPSA and the Office of the Provost jointly sponsored six summer fellowships each in the amount of \$6,000, awarded to individual students or teams of students

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collaborating to do research in innovative and interdisciplinary ways. A poster session and award reception will be held on October 1, 2008 from 4-5pm in the Graduate Student Center at 3615 Locust Walk. This event is open to all and will provide the award recipients with the opportunity to present their research to, and receive feedback from the Penn community. Please RSVP via the Graduate Student Center website: <http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/zurich/register>

### **Social, Cultural & Networking Events (Summer 2008)**

Over the summer GAPSA sponsored 16 social events attended by more than 850 graduate and professional students. These included “Center City Sips” events, brunch at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, tickets to Phillies games, to “Cirque du Soleil,” and a co-sponsored event with Philadelphia Live Arts and the Philly Fringe Festival. A list of current GAPSA events can be found online: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/engage/events>

### **Changes to the Allocation of Funding for School Student Governments (2008-2009)**

The allocation of funding for school-specific student governments has change for FY2009 to reflect the changes in the way that the University assesses the General Fee. Beginning in September 2008, dissertating students, as a group, will be contributing more General Fee than they have in the past; however, overall the change is revenue neutral across the University. In order to maintain equitable distribution of student government funds, reflecting the paying contributions of students enrolled in each school, GAPSA has therefore adjusted the school government allocations to account for the increase in the General Fee contributions of dissertating students. As a result, schools with large percentages of dissertating students will see an increase in their student government funding, while schools that have small percentages of dissertating students will see a decrease in available funds, coinciding with the decrease in the General Fee for their students.

### **Appointment of Representatives to University-Wide Committees (2008-2009)**

Every year new and returning graduate and professional students have the opportunity to become actively involved in shaping and improving education and student life at Penn by representing student concerns and ideas on University-wide committees. For the 2008-2009 academic year, GAPSA has appointed a vibrant and diverse group of about 100 students, hailing from all 12 of graduate and professional schools, to about 38 different committees, councils and advisory boards including two new ones: the Penn InTouch Refresh Student Advisory Board and the Counselling and Psychological Services Advisory Board.

### **Newly Updated Website (2008-2009)**

Over the summer the GAPSA website was updated to include new information about meetings, events, student government leaders, student groups, funding opportunities, resources for graduate and professional students at Penn and descriptions of all University-wide committees, councils and advisory boards with graduate and professional student representation. The site is located at <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu>.

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**The Executive Board (2008-2009)**

Chair: Andrew J. Rennekamp (Medicine, PhD)

Vice Chair: Alejandro Hagan (Social Policy & Practice/Wharton, MSW/MBA)

Vice Chair for Communications: Alexandra K. Kotsovos (Nursing, MSN)

Vice Chair for Equity and Access: Esther O. Agbaje (Arts and Sciences, MGA)

Vice Chair for Finance: Christa Y. Heyward (Medicine, PhD)

Interim Vice Chair for International Affairs: Natalie Williams (Education, MEd)

Vice Chair for Operations: Sarah M. Smith (Dental, DMD)

Vice Chair for Professional Students: Mat Abramsky (Design/Wharton, MCP/MBA)

Vice Chair for Research Students: TBD

Vice Chair for Social Activities: Jessica K. Kim (Education, EdD)

Vice Chair for Student Life: Nicole L. Thorpe (Design, MCP)

Vice Chair for Student Programs: Christina Arlt (Design, MCP)