
Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting on October 15, 2008

The tenth regularly scheduled meeting of GAPSA Executive Board was convened on October 15, 2008 at 6:01 PM in the second floor conference room of the Graduate Student Center.

Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Present were: Andrew Rennekamp, Sarah Smith, Alexandra Kotsovos, Alejandro Hagan, Christa Heyward, Omar Khan, Mat Abramsky, Jessica Kim, Nikki Thorpe, Jonathan Lukens, Esther Agbaje and Christina Arlt.

Approval of the Minutes from Prior Meetings

The changes to last meeting's minutes put forth by GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp were unanimously approved.

Reports

Chair's Report

GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp welcomed two new Vice Chairs, Vice Chair for Research Students Jonathan Lukens and Vice Chair for International Affairs Omar Khan.

Meeting with Philadelphia-area Graduate Student Governments

Mr. Rennekamp met with the leaders of other Philadelphia area graduate student government presidents. The University of the Sciences of Philadelphia's graduate student executive board is a small group with some funding but would like to hold a joint event with GAPSA. This executive board would like for the GAPSA Executive Board to meet and discuss issues and ideas. Mr. Rennekamp asked whether the Executive Board should agree to this and if so, when would be an appropriate time to meet. Mr. Rennekamp suggested inviting the USP Executive Board to an existing GAPSA happy hour event. Drexel's graduate student Executive Board is also interested in meeting with GAPSA. Penn students may overwhelm a joint Penn, Drexel, and USP school-wide event due to the large number of Penn students compared to the other schools. Vice Chair for Student Programs Christina Arlt stated that she would be willing to meet with the other Executive Boards and that they could jointly collaborate on organizing events. The join governments could organize an event similar to College Day on the Parkway where undergraduate students from Philadelphia area colleges and universities could meet. Ms. Arlt suggested working with Campus Philly on this event as they have someone on their staff dedicated to graduate students. Campus Philly is interested in persuading college students who study in Philadelphia to remain in the city after graduation. Vice Chair for Social Activities Jessica Kim stated that it is important to build a positive relationship with Penn's neighbors and a positive start would be to attend the other Philadelphia area schools' events. Ms. Kim noted that the GAPSA budget is strained but she would be willing to collaborate with other schools in organizing events. Ms. Kim suggested creating an event called the Philly Summit similar to the Ivy Summit. Ms. Arlt suggested that GAPSA could take charge in advertising an event already planned by another school.

Mr. Rennekamp agreed with Ms. Arlt. Mr. Rennekamp suggested planning a collaborative event that costs little or no money, such as a community service event where GAPSA could pay for transportation to and lunch at the site. Mr. Rennekamp stated that Drexel has a great deal of soccer field space and a day-long soccer tournament event could be planned for the Philadelphia area schools. Vice Chair for Finance Christa Heyward stated that GAPSA could provide space for this event by using Bauer Field. Mr. Rennekamp stated that this event could be organized by Ms. Arlt. Ms. Heyward suggested notifying Temple in some way, though it does not have a direct student government. Ms. Heyward stated that Temple has programs for professional students but was unsure of the programs offered for graduate students in general.

October University Council Report

Mr. Rennekamp emailed out a draft of the GAPSA October University Council Status Report and invited any comments or questions.

Ticketleap.com Meeting

Mr. Rennekamp stated that a group met with representatives from ticketleap.com in order to solve issues pertaining to online ticketing for GAPSA events. Each Vice Chair should be checking his/her box regularly. Mailbox labels will be made by the Vice Chair for Operations.

Mail

Mr. Rennekamp stated that a great deal of mail has been coming into the GAPSA office mailbox pertaining to travel grants and international students.

Dinner with the Provost

Mr. Rennekamp reminded the Executive Board to RSVP to the GAPSA Executive Board dinner held at the Provost's home. Vice Chair for Social Activities Jessica Kim and Vice Chair for Communications Alexandra Kotsovos stated that they could not attend.

GAPSA School-wide Email

Mr. Rennekamp stated that once a month GAPSA is permitted to send an email through the administration that reaches every graduate and professional student. Mr. Rennekamp stated that this month's email should be sent out now and be focused on the upcoming Townhall Meeting on October 22nd. Mr. Rennekamp asked if any other items should be included in this email. First Vice Chair Alejandro Hagan suggested including information that a suggestion box for GradFest and last year's GradFest video will soon be up on the GAPSA website. Mr. Rennekamp asked when these items will be posted on the website. Ms. Kotsovos stated that she will post these items in the near future. Mr. Rennekamp stated that the school-wide email must be sent out as soon as possible and that any information not currently included on the GAPSA website should not be included in the school-wide email. Ms. Heyward stated that it is appropriate to only include one idea or event in each monthly email. Ms. Arlt suggested including at the bottom of the email a sentence about the GAPSA website. Vice Chair for Equity and Access Esther Agbaje suggested including a more creative subject line for the GAPSA monthly emails to catch students' attentions. Vice Chair for Student Life Nikki Thorpe suggested including an image in the monthly emails. Mr. Rennekamp stated that

images may be processed incorrectly when the email is formatted and as such images should probably not be included in the monthly emails.

First Vice Chair's Report

Meeting with the Director of the Graduate Student Center, Anita Mastroeini

First Vice Chair Alejandro Hagan met with the Director of the Graduate Student Center, Anita Mastroeini to discuss partnering with the GSC in renting out The Bridge and showing a James Bond movie. Mr. Hagan stated that the Social Activities' and Student Programs' budgets could help fund this event. Ms. Arlt stated that she had already planned for this event to be included in the Student Programs budget.

GradFest Suggestion Box and Video

Mr. Hagan stated that in the near future on the GAPSA website there will be a GradFest suggestion box and last year's GradFest video.

Leadership Meeting

Mr. Hagan stated that he met with Vice Chair for Professional Students Mat Abramsky to discuss ideas for the leadership retreat and program this year. Ms. Heyward asked if any research students are currently involved with the leadership committee and if none are involved, to recruit some research students.

GradFest Tradition Ideas

Mr. Hagan stated that creating an additional event for GradFest that could continue as a yearly tradition. Mr. Hagan stated that an event similar to the Walnut Walk held by Wharton could be adapted as a school-wide event where all graduate and professional students could participate and dress up as their own school's stereotypes. Mr. Hagan asked for comments or suggestions concerning this idea. Ms. Agbaje stated that this type of pub crawl event would be appealing to a set portion of graduate and professional students but a large number of students would feel left out. Ms. Agbaje suggested holding event that would be more broad-ranging. Mr. Abramsky asked what types of events would be considered more broad-ranging. Ms. Agbaje stated she was unsure of a specific event but an event that was not alcoholic would be more appropriate. Mr. Hagan noted that at GradFest alcohol would be available. Ms. Arlt stated that copying the Wharton pub crawl event would not be original nor would it be professional. Mr. Rennekamp noted that there already exist two big drinking events associated with GradFest. Mr. Abramsky suggested that other events that could be held the day before GradFest - for example, a paintball tournament between schools.

Vice Chair for Professional Students' Report

Vice Chair for Professional Students Mat Abramsky stated that the Professional Council met and created four task forces which will work on four priority focus issues for this academic year. They are Leadership Development, Financial Aid, Interdisciplinary Coursework and Student Recognition.

Vice Chair for Research Students' Report

Vice Chair for Research Students Jonathan Lukens stated that there will be a Research Council meeting tomorrow night, October 16th, to review research student travel grant applications. Mr. Lukens stated that next week he will be reviewing two academic funding grants.

Vice Chair for International Affairs' Report

Vice Chair for International Affairs Omar Khan stated that he plans to add five seats to the International Council, bringing the total number of members from 10 to 15. Mr. Khan stated that he plans to attend three transition meetings in the near future with outgoing Interim Vice Chair for International Affairs Natalie Williams, former Vice Chair for International Affairs Anne-Katrine Arnold and administrators in the Office of International Programs, The International Student Advisory Board and the International Council work closely together. Mr. Khan will be meeting with the International Council to outline goals for this academic year. Mr. Khan will be appointing a Deputy Vice Chair for International Affairs after his meeting with the International Council. Mr. Rennekamp noted that all International Council members and Deputy Vice Chair appointees must be approved by the General Assembly.

Vice Chair for Equity and Access' Report

Vice Chair for Equity and Access Esther Agbaje stated that the Pluralism Council will be meeting on Thursday, October 16th at 7:30 pm.

Vice Chair for Finance's Report

Vice Chair for Finance Christa Heyward stated that the Finance Committee met last Friday and approved \$12,000 worth of student groups' fall event funding. Ms. Heyward stated that when the Professional or Research Council approves travel grant applications, the Vice Chair for Professional Students or the Vice Chair for Research Students must notify her of the persons receiving the award and the dollar amount awarded. Ms. Heyward reminded the Executive Board members to send her their September expense reports. Mr. Abramsky noted that Lynn Moller in the Office of Student Life manages the expense reporting. Ms. Heyward stated that Ms. Moller handles the receipts from transactions but the internal accounting is handled by the Vice Chair for Finance. Both people must be kept in the loop.

Vice Chair for Student Life's Report

Vice Chair for Student Life Nikki Thorpe met with Director of the Graduate Student Center, Anita Mastroeini, to discuss housing funding development and alumni funding. Ms. Thorpe stated that Ms. Mastroeini would like to discuss the issue of alumni funding with Mr. Rennekamp. Mr. Abramsky asked if during the meeting with Ms. Mastroeini the issue of student recognition funding could be discussed. Mr. Hagan asked if Ms. Thorpe needed any assistance in preparing and setting up for the upcoming Townhall meeting. Ms. Thorpe

stated that she and Vice Chair for Operations Sarah Smith were handling the Townhall meeting preparation.

Vice Chair for Social Activities' Report

Vice Chair for Social Activities Jessica Kim stated on the GAPSA website there is a statement that to attend an event, the student must bring their Penn card and government issued identification to receive admittance. Ms. Kim stated that at one of the GAPSA sponsored events an attendee became belligerent due to the fact that she did not have appropriate documentation and was denied admittance. Ms. Kim spoke with the Social Activities committee concerning this issue. Ms. Kim stated that on the website there should exist a disclaimer stating that even if an attendee is a Penn student, he or she could be removed from the event. One of the Social Activities committee members had stated previously that some students come to GAPSA events after they have "prepartied." Ms. Kim stated that if a student is visibly drunk, he or she should not be permitted to attend the event. Mr. Rennekamp stated that the venue staff at the event site is able to remove attendees as well. Ms. Kim stated that it is important to notify students of this policy in order to protect GAPSA, as GAPSA is ultimately responsible. Ms. Heyward agreed with Ms. Kim. Mr. Abramsky stated that everyone should be reporting unruly guests to the bouncers at the events. Ms. Kim stated that at some events there are no bouncers and in this case she can refer students to the GAPSA website disclaimer. Mr. Rennekamp stated that Ms. Kim should draft a disclaimer and send the draft to Vice Chair for Communications Alexandra Kotsovos. Mr. Rennekamp stated that the Social Activities committee should make the ultimate decision on whether or not a disruptive guest ought to be removed from the premises. Mr. Hagan stated that some students are enrolled simultaneously as an undergraduate student and a graduate or professional student. Ms. Kim stated that this would be a different situation.

Vice Chair for Student Programs' Report

Vice Chair for Student Programs Christina Arlt stated that the trip to Linvilla Orchards was a success with 46 of the 48 student ticket holders attending. Ms. Arlt is currently planning trips to see the musicals Hairspray and The Producers. The Student Programs committee is also currently organizing events such as a rock climbing trip, dinner outings, and an ice skating trip.

Vice Chair for Communications' Report

Vice Chair for Communications Alexandra Kotsovos stated that the flyers for the Townhall meeting are finished and should be placed in all graduate and professional schools. Ms. Kotsovos stated that she also made larger flyers to be posted on the schools' walls. Mr. Rennekamp stated that each Executive Board member should distribute flyers in their assigned school.

Vice Chair for Operations' Report

Vice Chair for Operations Sarah Smith had nothing to report.

Follow-up Questions

Mr. Khan met with the Graduate Student Engineering Government and was told that engineering students are unsure of how travel grants are awarded. Questions regarding selection criteria and available funding especially for masters students were asked. Mr. Abramsky stated that the Professional Council committee will be reevaluating the structure and process of travel grant awards. The criteria will be more selective and this will be clarified in the next month. Mr. Rennekamp stated that there are two different travel grant awards for research PhD students and for Masters of Science in Engineering. If the degree sought is a Masters of Science in Engineering, then the student would be awarded a professional travel grant if it is a Ph.D. then the student should apply to the Research Council. Mr. Abramsky stated that in the near future information on professional travel grants will be included on the GAPSA website.

Special Orders

G12 Reception

Issues concerning the G12 Reception were previously discussed.

Meeting with President Guttman

Mr. Rennekamp noted that Ms. Smith and Mr. Khan would not be able to attend the meeting tomorrow with President Amy Guttman on October 16th. The meeting will take place from 3-4 pm in the Presidential Conference Room in 100 College Hall. Ms. Thorpe stated that she would need to leave the meeting early. Mr. Rennekamp stated that this meeting's agenda is set and has already been distributed.

Townhall "Dinner and Discussion on Housing" Meeting Preparation

Dr. Harris Sokoloff from the Graduate School of Education spent an hour with the GAPSA Executive Board training the Board members to be moderators for the GAPSA Dinner & Discussion to be held next week on October 22nd. The Board thanked Dr. Sokoloff for his time and assistance in what was an informative session. Ms. Thorpe stated she will bring flip chart papers for use during the Townhall discussions. Vice Chair for Research Students Jonathan Lukens asked what the agenda of the Townhall Meeting will be. Mr. Abramsky stated that the discussion will be about graduate and professional student housing, both on and off campus.

GA Meeting on October 22nd

Mr. Rennekamp stated that the General Assembly meeting on October 22nd will be shortened due to the Townhall Meeting. Mr. Abramsky stated that the Professional Council needs to meet during this meeting. Mr. Lukens stated that the Research Council needs to meet to review travel grant applications. Mr. Abramsky stated that the Professional Council meeting could be shortened by 15 minutes to accommodate the Townhall meeting. Ms. Arlt stated that she needs to meet with the Student Programs committee. Ms. Heyward asked if a full General Assembly meeting would be necessary. Mr. Rennekamp stated that a full General Assembly meeting would not be necessary and more time should be devoted to the Townhall meeting. Mr. Rennekamp suggested holding the Townhall meeting from 6-7:15 pm, the

Professional and Research Council meetings from 7:30-8:15, and the Standing Committees from 8:15-8:45 pm. The 15 minute extra time between the Townhall meeting and the Council meetings will allow time for non-GAPSA members to leave. Mr. Rennekamp stated that there would be no full Assembly portion of the meeting on October 22nd.

Ivy Summit

Mr. Rennekamp stated that the Ivy Summit would take place before the next Executive Board meeting. Mr. Rennekamp reminded the Ivy Summit attendees that the flight leaves at 1:05 pm. Ms. Arlt asked whether the Executive Board members would be meeting beforehand to travel to the airport together. Mr. Abramsky stated that it would be cheaper to split cabs than to take the Regional Rail to the airport. Mr. Hagan suggested taking two cabs. Ms. Kim stated that off peak rates for the Regional Rail would be \$7 and that she could purchase even cheaper roundtrip tickets. Mr. Abramsky stated that it would take 30 minutes to travel to the airport and if the Executive Board members met up beforehand, it would be best to meet at 11:30 am. Ms. Thorpe stated that she would prefer to meet at the airport. Mr. Abramsky stated that this issue could be solved via email communication. Ms. Heyward stated that a great deal of free items is available at the Ivy Summit. Mr. Hagan asked whether any GradFest T-shirts or bags were left to be given out at the Ivy Summit. Ms. Kim stated that she and Ms. Heyward would handle the items to be given out. Ms. Kim stated that there were two boxes full of black GAPSA T-shirts and these boxes are now missing from the GAPSA office. Mr. Hagan stated that the Graduate Student Center may have distributed these at the New Student Orientation. Mr. Rennekamp confirmed that the t-shirts were given out during NSO. Ms. Heyward stated that other schools give out notebooks, pens, T-shirts, etc. Mr. Rennekamp stated that on the Harvard website there is a tentative agenda, but this has not been finalized. Mr. Rennekamp reminded the Ivy Summit attendees to fill out the meal survey.

Meeting with the University of the Sciences of Philadelphia

Mr. Rennekamp asked if it would be possible to have the meeting with the University of the Sciences of Philadelphia on the Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving, despite only half of the GAPSA Executive Board being present at that time. Mr. Rennekamp noted that this meeting may not be very productive if Ms. Kim and Ms. Arlt would not be able to attend. Mr. Abramsky suggested asking USP for some event ideas. Mr. Rennekamp stated that this meeting could also be held in January if the schedule in November is too hectic. Mr. Hagan stated that any collaboration would be positive. Ms. Heyward stated that it would be appropriate to listen to what students from other schools want to do. Ms. Arlt noted that today's meeting ran efficiently even with an hour long guest speech. If GAPSA were to invite USP to the GAPSA Executive Board meeting for the first hour, this would be efficient and appropriate. Mr. Rennekamp stated that a meeting in this format would most likely be held in the spring. Mr. Hagan stated that school interactions could begin as soon as possible even in the absence of Ms. Kim and Ms. Arlt. Mr. Rennekamp stated this could work if Ms. Kim and Ms. Arlt were amenable. Ms. Kim and Ms. Arlt approved contingent upon holding a meeting with USP in the spring. Mr. Rennekamp stated that a separate meeting with USP and Mr. Rennekamp, Ms. Kim, and Ms. Arlt could also be arranged. Mr. Rennekamp stated that a tentative meeting with USP will be scheduled the Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving, November 25th.

Unfinished Business



None

New Business

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.