
To: Brenda Brand, Office of the Secretary
From: Andrew J. Rennekamp, GAPSA Chair
Date: December 3, 2008
Re: GAPSA University Council Status Report for December 10, 2008

GAPSA Sets Focus Issues (2008-2009)

The General Assembly has identified six key issues for focus this year:

1. Evaluation of Housing Options for Graduate and Professional Students
2. Evaluation of Graduate & Professional Alumni Relations and Development
3. Evaluation of Career Services with specific focus on Alumni interactions
4. Evaluation of Penn Transit Services
5. Evaluation of Services for Students with Children
6. Evaluation of the ongoing Penn Connects Project

The Professional Student Council has created four tasks forces for the year:

1. Student Recognition and Conference Travel Awards
2. Leadership Program Development and Planning
3. Facilitation of Interdisciplinary Learning and Information
4. Financial Aid Assistance for Professional Students

The Research Student Council has identified four key focus issues for the year:

1. Paperless application process for both academic funding and conference travel grants
2. Obtain and review the Ph.D. exit survey (SDSO) data collected by the University
3. Work with members of SASgov on issues related to library policy
4. Retirement planning for graduate students in research programs

The International Student Council has created three subcommittees for the year:

1. Employment Opportunities and Career Services for International Students
2. Financial Aid Assistance for International Students
3. Cultural Integration and Cross-cultural Exchange Programming

The Pluralism Council has identified three key focus issues for the year:

1. Obtain current information on underrepresented students to better engage them
2. Create a one-stop GAPSA webpage for information on diversity at Penn
3. Develop a Grad Club Day to showcase student organizations at the beginning of the year.

The Student Life Policy Council has identified three key focus areas for the year:

1. Graduate and Professional Student Housing
2. Sustainability as it Relates to Student Living and Working
3. Health and Safety of Graduate and Professional Students

Further details including Council and Assembly minutes can be found on the GAPSA website:
<http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/meetings/minutes>

Penn Landlord Survey (2008-2009)

We are pleased to announce that the Penn Landlord Survey has found a new home on the GAPSA website! GAPSA, with guidance from Off-Campus Services and in collaboration with the Undergraduate Assembly, is now collecting survey data to be released in Spring 2009. All entries will be eligible for randomly selected prizes through December 12, 2008. The survey and additional information can be found here: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/gapsa-landlord-survey>

GAPSA hosts Dinner Discussion on Housing Options at Penn (October 22, 2008)

Immediately following the last University Council meeting, GAPSA held focus group discussions from 6pm to 7:30pm in Bodek Lounge on housing options for graduate and professional students. The event was well attended with representation of students from all 12 graduate and professional schools. Each focus group consisted of 10 student participants and one GAPSA Executive Board member as facilitator. Before the event each facilitator participated in a training session led by Dr. Harris Sokoloff from the Graduate School of Education. The Housing forum is part of a larger yearlong GAPSA project, aimed at assessing and addressing the housing needs of graduate and professional students at Penn.

GAPSA Funds Student Travel to Academic Conferences (Fall 2008)

The GAPSA Research Student Council awarded 53 travel grants totalling \$14,500 to 53 research student applicants whom will each be presenting their research at academic conferences around the world during the Fall 2008 semester. In addition, the GAPSA Professional Student Council has awarded 18 grants totalling \$2,500 to students pursuing professional degrees.

Funding for Student Groups (Fall 2008)

GAPSA also provided a total of \$12,835 in funding for 18 different University-wide graduate and professional student-run organizations. These include cultural, artistic, religious, athletic, career and community service oriented groups. An additional \$12,000 was also supplied to student groups by the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life.

Members of the GAPSA Executive Board attend the Ivy Summit (October 24-26, 2008)

GAPSA sent six delegates to the 2008 Ivy Summit, hosted by Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts this year. The Summit, which was started by GAPSA and hosted at Penn in 2003-2004, is a three-day meeting of graduate and professional student government leaders from each of the Ivies. This year delegates from MIT were also invited to the Summit. Topics of discussion included housing options for graduate and professional students, alumni relations and graduate alumni development, event planning and stipend funding for research students. The 2009 Ivy Summit will be hosted by Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and the 2010 Ivy Summit will be held in Princeton, New Jersey. More information, including the text of our 2008 "State of the Eight" address, can be found online: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/links/ivy-summit>

Annual Halloween Costume Party (October 30, 2008)

GAPSA held its Traditional Halloween Costume Party at Fusion Grill in the Northern Liberties. About 700 students attended the event, which included a catwalk costume contest.

Pie Tasting for Charity (November 12-13, 2008)

GAPSA teamed up with the “Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance” (MANNA) to support their annual “Pie in the Sky” fundraiser. MANNA delivers nourishment to debilitated Philadelphia residents with terminal illness. During the two-day even, students were able to pay 25¢ to sample a piece of pie at the Graduate Student Center (3615 Locust Walk), and were given the opportunity to order whole pies in support of the charity.

GAPSA Sponsors Tree-Planting Event (November 15, 2008)

GAPSA partnered with “University City Green” to organize a community service event where graduate and professional students helped plant a total of 100 bare-root trees, from 9am to 1pm, in Malcolm X Park (52nd Street & Osage Avenue). Participants received lunch and a complementary t-shirt, provided by GAPSA.

GAPSA Special Election (November 19, 2008)

The General Assembly elected Natalie Williams (Education, MEd) as the new GAPSA Vice Chair for Communication. The positions had been vacant after the resignation of the previously elected Vice Chair. A complete list of all students involved in GAPSA can be found on the website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/introduction/membership>

Black & White Formal (November 21, 2008)

GAPSA hosted its first formal event of the year at Ms. Tootsie’s RBL (13th and South Streets). Professional and graduate students dressed to the nines in black, white, or black and white, as all hues were banned for the hottest event since the GradFest boatcruise redocked at Pier 3. From MBAs to JDs, to EdDs, any grad who is anyone was there.

GAPSA-UA Mentorship Program (2008-2009)

In an ongoing collaboration, GAPSA and the Undergraduate Assembly are co-sponsoring a mentorship program which pairs graduate students with undergraduates interested in their respective fields. The program currently costs \$1,800 annually, is jointly funded by GAPSA and the UA, and is run by the Graduate Student Center (3615 Locust Walk). Mentors and mentees are given \$8 “coffee talk” gifts cards, which they can use at coffee shops around campus. For more information and for mentor or mentee registration, visit the Graduate Student Center website: <http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/mentoring/>

GAPSA General Assembly (2008-2009)

The Professional Student Council

Amy Fuller (Arts and Sciences)
Jacob Uriel (Arts and Sciences)
Jill Harrison (Dental)
Christie Chavez (Dental)
Alexander Balloon (Design)
Chrissy Caggiano (Design)
Heather Curl (Education)*
Stephanie Wujcik (Education)
Maher Zamel (Education)
Carolyn Chernoff (Education)
Abraham Majesh (Engineering)
Swathi Madaiah (Engineering)
Jason Parris (Law)*
Yoonjee Kim (Law)
Lynn Yang (Law)
Raffaele Turco (Law)
Johanna Busch (Medicine)
Jeff Neal (Medicine)
David Guttman (Medicine)
Joceyln Blaisdell (Nursing)
Maribel Kissack (Nursing)
Tom Byrne (Social Policy)*
Guneeta Singh (Social Policy)
David Vafek (Veterinary)*
Karuna Patil (Veterinary)
Aleksander Baranski (Wharton)
Anthony Willis (Wharton)
Charles Xie (Wharton)
Gregg Gilbert (Wharton)
Maria Yuan (Wharton)
Matt Walters (Wharton)
Micky Hervitz (Wharton)

The Research Student Council

Susan Haas (Annenberg)*
Carla Cue (Arts and Sciences)*
Leslie Warden (Arts and Sciences)
Tim Shokair (Arts and Sciences)
Wenting Li (Arts and Sciences)
Stephanie Milk (Arts and Sciences)
Allison Sullivan (Arts and Sciences)
VACANT (Design)
Matthew Tarditi (Education)
Olga Shebonova (Engineering)
Lee Solomon (Medicine)*
Jacqui Simonet (Medicine)
Kamila Alexander (Nursing)*
Casey Bohrman (Social Policy)
Henry Friedman (Wharton)

*Members of the University Council