
Vice Chair for International Affairs January 2009 Report

Introduction

Since the formation of the International Council, there have been frequent changes in the leadership of the council, which has made it challenging for the council to focus on areas of interest for a longer period. As the newest Head of the Council, I have tried to set achievable goals based on the feedback of the international graduate students. For the current academic year, the council has decided to focus on the three issues of Employment, Financial Aid and Cultural Integration.

International Council Membership

The fifteen members working in the council belong to a very diverse group. These members represent ten different countries and six different professional schools at the University of Pennsylvania. For example, one member is a Kenyan studying at the Wharton Business School whereas another is from Greece studying at the Law School.

Budget Update

The council has been allocated a budget of \$5000, out of which \$100 was spent by the previous Interim Vice Chair. The remaining amount will be spent as per the requirements for completing the tasks outlined below.

Fall 2008 Summary

The council was divided into subgroups representing each issue. All members were given the option of choosing the area of interest to them to ensure that members would be motivated. Each subgroup was then asked to appoint a leader who would act as a point person for the Head of the Council. To ensure effective communication, a bi-weekly meeting time was set for the council after consultation with all the members. Also, each subgroup was requested to maintain contact outside of the council through subgroup meetings. Updates about subgroup meetings were taken from the leaders.

Spring 2009 Plans

Each subgroup has been assigned a specific set of tasks:

1. Employment Subgroup Task: Contact the Career and Alumni Offices of the all the twelve graduate schools to discuss the possibility of starting the mentoring program between Alumni and current international Students.
2. Financial Aid Subgroup Task: Contact SFS and OIP for information regarding loans and other financial support for international graduate students. Consider starting a work study program for international graduate students.
3. Cultural Integration Subgroup Task: Start a mentoring program between incoming and current international graduate students. Contact officials who are involved in such programs.



Meetings with the administration officials will ensure that the plans proposed by the council are attractive to both the administration and the student population. Meetings are currently being scheduled with the officials and the overall goal is to implement the plans by May 2009.

Submitted by Omar Khan, Vice Chair for International Affairs