
To: Brenda Brand, Office of the Secretary
From: Andrew J. Rennekamp, GAPSA Chair
Date: April 16, 2009
Re: GAPSA University Council Status Report for April 22, 2009

GAPSA Report on Housing for Graduate and Professional Students (March 25, 2009)

On March 25, 2009 the Assembly adopted a 14-page report on housing resources for graduate and professional students. The report contains a compilation of the feedback and data gathered by the Assembly to date, from a variety of sources, concerning the availability of suitable student housing options in the area surrounding the University. It presents several areas of concern and challenges facing our students and recommendations for how both GAPSA and the University administration can work to address them. The full text of this document can be found on the GAPSA website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/meetings/resolutions>

GAPSA Resolution on a Campus Climate Survey (March 25, 2009)

On March 25, 2009 the Assembly passed a resolution urging the Office of the Provost and the Council of Graduate Deans to implement, in coordination with the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, a periodic University-wide survey of graduate and professional students. This instrument would be used to assist in institutional effectiveness efforts and to support the University's mission and purpose by collecting data that will provide insight into the experiences, opinions, and satisfaction levels of students. The resolution was accompanied by a list of topics and questions, which the Assembly would like to see used in the design of the final instrument. The full text of the resolution and a proposed questionnaire can be found on the GAPSA website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/meetings/resolutions>

GAPSA Resolution on the Grassley-Sanders Amendment (March 25, 2009)

The Assembly also passed a resolution condemning the recent Grassley-Sanders amendment to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R.1 Federal Stimulus Bill), which places restrictions on the hiring of H-1B visa holders from companies receiving Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) money, as this legislation has already begun to negatively impact the future job prospects of our students. The GAPSA resolution urges the University Offices of the President and Vice President for Government and Community Affairs and our Congressmen to lobby against protectionist legislation in Washington, to work toward providing greater options for international graduate students, and to promote a culture of tolerance and understanding between individuals from different backgrounds. The full text of this resolution can be found on the GAPSA website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/meetings/resolutions>

GradFest 2009! (May 2, 2009)

GAPSA will host its 3rd Annual GradFest event on Saturday, May 2, 2009 from 12-5pm in Wynn Commons. GradFest is a unique celebration of graduate and professional student life at Penn. Since 2007, Gradfest has attracted students from across the University to share in a relaxing afternoon of academic showcasing, music, food and fun. This year, Gradfest will include an inter-school competition, Quizzo tournament, Mechanical Bull, Casino, Picnic, Happy Hour, and many raffle prizes. Sponsors include Apple, AT&T, Bed Bath & Beyond, Fuze Beverages, the Computer Connection, Lenova Computers, Penn Business Services and the Office of the Provost. Tickets are available online or at the Graduate Student Center. For more information can be found online: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/>.



GAPSA Community Service Events (2008-2009)

This year GAPSA sponsored and supported several community service events encouraging and facilitating interactions between graduate and professional Penn students and the University City community. These included a Pie Tasting Fundraiser for “MANNA” (11/12 and 11/13), “U.C. Green” Tree Planting (11/15 and 4/25), volunteering at the “Ronald McDonald House”, volunteering at the Penn Museum’s “Darwin Day” (2/15) and “Superhero Day” (3/22), volunteering as part of “Philadelphia Spring Clean Up Day” (4/4), and at the “Red Cross Walk to Save Lives” (4/18). All participants in GAPSA sponsored community service events received a free GAPSA volunteer T-shirt.

Landlord Survey Results (Spring 2009)

GAPSA is pleased to announce the public release of the 2009 Penn Landlord Survey results. With guidance from the Office of Off-Campus Services and in coordination with the Undergraduate Assembly, the Office of Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs, and the graduate student associations at Drexel University and the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, GAPSA has been collecting housing data from renters in the Philadelphia area since November 2008. During this time period more than 1,200 individuals have responded to the on-going survey, which is designed to produce landlord ratings that will help incoming and current students and staff make better-informed decisions about housing options in Philadelphia. Full results and the survey itself can be accessed publicly on the GAPSA website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/gapsa-landlord-survey>.



GAPSA Funds Student Travel to Academic Conferences (Spring 2008)

The GAPSA Research Student Council awarded 68 travel grants totaling \$18,677 to 68 research student applicants whom will each be presenting their research at academic conferences around the world during the Spring 2008 semester. This includes matching funding from the Office of the Provost. In addition, the GAPSA Professional Student Council has awarded about 50 grants totaling \$13,540 to students pursuing professional degrees. Additional information, including instruction for summer travel grant applications can be found on the GAPSA website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/engage/funding>.

Executive Board (2009-2010)

GAPSA Executive Board Elections were held on April 8, 2009. The Assembly welcomes and congratulates the following individuals whose term will begin on May 1, 2009 and run through April 30, 2010.

Chair: Corbett Brown (Nursing, PhD)

Vice Chair: Lee Solomon (Medicine, PhD)

Vice Chair for Communications: Allison Sullivan (SAS, PhD)

Vice Chair for Equity & Access: Michelle Jacobson (Arts & Sciences, MES)

Vice Chair for Finance: Ashley Goss (Medicine, PhD)

Vice Chair for International Affairs: vacant

Vice Chair for Operations: David Stein (Engineering, PhD)

Vice Chair for Professional: Jade Palomino (Law, JD)

Vice Chair for Research: Henry Friedman (Wharton, PhD)

Vice Chair for Social Activities: David Conklin (Engineering, PhD)

Vice Chair for Student Life: vacant

Vice Chair for Student Programs: Maher Zamel (Education, EdD)

The Assembly elected to leave two seats empty; these will be filled by special election in September. More information including contact information can be found on the GAPSA website: <http://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/intro/membership>.