
To: Brenda Brand, Office of the Secretary
From: Corbett D. Brown, GAPSA Chair
Date: September 24, 2009
Re: GAPSA University Council Status Report for September 24, 2009

GAPSA Conference Travel Grants (2008-2009)

In 2008-2009, the Graduate the Professional Student Assembly awarded a total of \$43,845 in international and domestic travel grants to support research and professional students as they presented their work and represented Penn at academic conferences around the globe. Jonathan Lukens (Social Policy & Practice, PhD) and former Vice Chair for Research Students, with the support of Henry Friedman (Wharton, PhD), current Vice Chair for Research Students, led the initiative within the Research Council to significantly raise the maximum limit available for research student travel grants from \$300 to \$500. This increase in funding will greatly alleviate the financial burden felt by students who must incur travel expenses in the process of furthering their research objectives through conference attendance.

Funding for the Graduate Student Center (2008-2009)

In 2008-2009, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly gave a total of \$15,900 to the Graduate Student Center. This total consists of two programs that the Graduate Student Center provided for Graduate and Professional students, namely the “Navigating Series” and “Mentoring” program, which received grants of \$15,000 and \$900 respectively.

GradFest (Spring 2009)

GAPSA held the third annual “GradFest” celebration on May 2, 2009. The event included a carnival and picnic, casino and happy hour, Quizzo, numerous raffles, head to head school competitions, and school-run FunShops. GradFest was made possible by the generous sponsorship of: Apple, The Graduate Student Center, Office of the Provost, Bed Bath & Beyond, and the Penn Bookstore, and the Department and Alumni Relations at Penn.

GAPSA-Provost Award for Interdisciplinary Innovation (Summer 2009)

Over the past three months, GAPSA and the Office of the Provost jointly sponsored seven summer fellowships, each in the amount of \$6,000, awarded to individual students or teams of students collaborating to do research in innovative and interdisciplinary ways. A poster session and award reception will be held on October 1, 2009 from 4-5:30pm 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 Events (Summer 2009)

Throughout the Summer GAPSA sponsored eleven social events that served approximately 500 students. These activities included brunches, Duckie Tours, Tequila tasting, and school focused happy hours. The main activity that kicked off the 2009 Fall Semester was held at Strikes, and was attended by over 450 graduate and professional students! David Conklin (Engineering, PhD), the Vice Chair for Social Activities, already has a year's worth of activities in mind, and on paper, to help Penn students network, socialize, and reinforce the Penn Graduate and Professional student identity.

Appointment of Representatives to University-Wide Committees (2009-2010)

Vice Chair for Equity & Access, Michelle Jacobson (Arts & Sciences, MES), has the chief responsibility of appointing students to committees throughout the University. This is no small task, with over 100 seats to fill, ranging from University Council seats to a committee seat on the policy board of WXPB 88.5FM Radio Station. Michelle is a valuable member of the Executive Board, and is ensuring that each respective committee seat is filled.

Using Technology and Social Networking to Communicate (2009-2010)

Allison Sullivan (SAS, PhD), Vice Chair for Communications, has worked diligently during the summer in updating the GAPSA website and in searching for innovative ways to communicate with the graduate and professional students. Recently Allison created a Facebook "group" for GAPSA, which is becoming very popular among students.

The Executive Board (2009-2010)

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 (Acting): Emily Joy Rothschild (SAS-Music, PhD)*

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

*A special election to be held October 7, 2009.