A meeting of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly was held at 7:00PM on November 16th, 2011 in Houston Hall (Ben Franklin Room).


Executive Committee members in attendance: Joe Friedman, Nina Zhao, Kim Wexler, James Wiley, Mike Hore, Maria Murray, Rachel Delgado, Shaina Oake, Ben Ediger, Jason Cantu, Usama Mahmud, & Seattle Wang.

Chair Joe Friedman welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. He began the meeting with an update from Ivy Summit – in comparison to the other Ivy League schools; Penn is doing well above average.

The Vice Chair Nina Zhao gave a presentation regarding the GA Award for Outstanding Contributions. At the last meeting of the semester, GAPSA would like to recognize contributions from our GA members. The award is to go to the GA’s (2 this semester & 2 next semester). We will be soliciting nominations. Please make a nomination followed by a short blurb.

Roll Call was taken by Vice Chair of Operations, Jason Cantu, and Minutes were approved.

Maria Murray gave a short presentation regarding her position as the Vice Chair for Student Life.

Guest Speakers:
Anita Mastroieni, Director of Graduate Student Center and Family Resource Center with DeAnna Cheung, Associate Director.

DeAnna talked about GAPSA’s relationship with the Graduate Student Center. In 1999 GAPSA wrote a letter expressing the need to have a Graduate Student Center. The administration put money towards renovating an old fraternity house. The administration hired Anita and then DeAnna was hired. Part time Graduate Students were hired as fellows to work on putting events together. The fellows make the coffee, sell tickets, answer phones, etc. The Grad Center is now 10yrs old.

Priorities this year are Family Backup Care Center & lactation pump stations.

Grad Center priorities – All of the events tend to be very well attended by international students. The Grad Center has been hearing the people want to speak in different languages at some of the events. So, there will be events that will be conducted in different languages.
New student orientation for Graduate Students is done through the Graduate Center. Schools take care of the academic side and the Grad Center takes care of the getting oriented side (SEPTA, the Grad Center, opportunities). If your school orientation was heavy or long, you can tell your school to cut parts that are already covered by the Grad Center. Also, part of orientation is now also on-line through on-line seminar sessions.

New will be some new alumni initiatives. Last Tuesday there was a very successful alumni event. However, there were very few young alumni. Please update your info once you graduate.

Quaker net is the online alumni database. The Grad Center has taken it on to promote it to Grad Students. Students are contacted through a listserv that is opt in based. The Grad Center meets with student affairs from each school – they can advocate for you at your school.

Regarding funding, GAPSA had a declining commitment towards funding. GAPSA however, has always helped fund the center. A lot of the funding the Center has gotten has gone towards building renewal.

The Vice Chair for Equity and Access then gave a presentation regarding how she has been working to speak on behalf of students that may be marginalized or non-traditional students. She also manages elections and seeks to fill seats on university committees.

VC Updates:

Chair
The Exec board had a meeting with the Provost and Vice Provost for Education. In addition we are on various University Committees. These committees include people from the UA and faculty representatives. Our second meeting of the semester will be at the division for public safety. The Vice President, Maureen Rush gives a presentation and you also get a tour of the facility to see how PennDPS works. Going forward we have 7 meetings next semester.

Vice Chair
GradFest for next year – working on finding out dates and times. Student advocacy side: sits on the Trustees for Student life. She gave a presentation about 2 weeks ago to discuss life as a student at Penn. She is also sitting on SHIAC with Andy Bins, Vice Provost. Please let her know if you have any questions regarding Health Insurance. She also sat on CCTV monitoring. She has been helping Rachel with University Committees. Please verify if you are on one and volunteer if you are interested.

VC for Communications
If you are not receiving her e-mails, please let her know.

VC for Equity and Access
In the Spring Semester you will get a message regarding getting our picture taken on the steps of Fischer Benet. In the first week of December Ms. Vick and her staff will be giving a presentation at the grad center. She will also be working on making blankets for Project Linus.

VC for Finances
Working on getting banners for awardees to show at their events.

VC for International Affairs
Is working with international students from the Dental School. Only 15% of international students are able to opt out of health insurance. He is working to talk to student health services to help
reach out to people concerned and find a remedy for the situation. He will also be looking for speaker events.

**VC for Operations**
Happy Hour at Mikey’s. Our schedule for next semester has been confirmed and will be e-mailed shortly. Restaurant suggestions?

**VC for Research Students**
Navigating series is well attended by research students but open to professional students as well. The research pool helps fund a lot of services and it is running a deficit – they are trying to come up with a solution. The Provost award is on the horizon. It will be going onto the website – It’s a $6,000 summer fellowship to do research.

**VC for Social Activities**
Black and white formal was sold out and it was more than double last year’s.

**VC for Student Life**
The transit survey has almost 1,300 respondents. We need about 200 more people to respond.

**VC for Student Programs**
Volley ball game first round was 2 weeks ago and it was a huge success. Over 200 people were in the first round. Giselle has been taking a huge lead. This Sunday will be the second and third round. Next Friday is the Flyers game. There will be a 3 hour open bar + dinner and desert for Thanksgiving.

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**General Assembly Member Formal Introductions (School of Social Policy and Practice, Wharton School, & Annenberg):**

**SP2:**
Abigail Pleeter: 2nd yr MSW – second year on GAPSA. SP2 is comprised of MSW, MSP, and PhDs. They strive to change policy in Philadelphia. Most of the students spend 3 days a week in the field and then the rest of the week in class. Tom Byrne: Was in GAPSA last year. Some projects from people in SP2 regard people’s access to healthcare and insurance.

**Wharton:**
The average age is about 28. A lot come in with diverse business backgrounds – 40% international. Wes Whitaker – MBA program has about 1,700 students.
Any Wu – PhD student. 150 PhD students. 9 Different PhD programs. Entrepreneurship and technological innovation interest.

**Annenberg:**
Elizabeth Roodhouse – There are about 12-15 people in every cohort and it is the #1 program in the Nation – Social Science Program. They are the big shiny glass box on campus. Annenberg generates the largest election survey in the nation. They are bigger than the National Election Survey. They are better funded than Wharton. Studies research methodology and data. There are Qualitative data students as well and Quantitative. Everyone gets a PhD in Communications.

**Discretionary Fund Votes:**
Three groups of students came before the General Assembly requesting money from the Discretionary Fund.
Group 1:

PennEnergy Event
(Rainer 4th year Mechanical Engineer & Matt 4th year student)

PennEnergy unites students doing research in Energy. Overall budget of trip was $800 - $400 was covered by GSAC.

Questions:
1) Why pay for catering?
   To take advantage of the time spent in DC, they decided to cater rather than spend time going out for food – suggested by supervisors.

Group 2:

Medical School Winter Formal
(Alexi)

They chose Sat Dec. 10 and will be using the Spirit of Philadelphia Cruise line. There will be a sit-down dinner and it is open to all grad students. It will be in the next e-mail. In terms of finances, they looked at different dates but the best deal was Spirit of Philadelphia. The price is $80 a head. They got $3,000 from the school of Medicine. The rest of the funding came from the class fund. Selling tickets subsidized. They really want to appeal to a much broader base. They are asking for $1,000.

Questions:
1) How many people attend?
   400
2) How many people outside of Perelman attend
   There isn’t too much data regarding that. They only know that people from other schools do attend.
3) How many people are +1s or not involved with the University?
   There isn’t data on that. People usually don’t buy more than 1 ticket.
4) How did you come up with your $10 amount?
   The tickets are actually $65 with the subsidy.

Group 3:

Graduate School of Education – Essay Contest
(Kelly)

She works at Andrew Jackson. There are two ACT 48 approved seminars. She wants to show how to implement a globalized curriculum in your course. The second is about integrating sports in a way where it promotes a unifying idea. It’s an essay contest. Total cost of the project is about $3,000 and $900 has been raised. She is asking GAPSA for $1,000.

Questions:
1) How many schools are being targeted along with various associations?
   34 schools and counting
2) What is the $ used for?
   This is to offer prizes and not charge an entry fee. Judges are 1st year graduate students who won’t pay. The professors are asking for an Honorarium.
Discussion following the presentations:

*PennEnergy Event*
RESOLVED: By a majority vote, PennEnergy will receive $200.

*Medical School Winter Formal*
RESOLVED: By a majority vote, the Medical School will receive $750 for their winter formal.

*Essay Contest*
RESOLVED: By a majority vote, the Essay Contest will receive $1,000.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06PM by the chair and was followed by internal committee meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Jason Cantu, GAPSA VC for Operations