GAPSA General Assembly Meeting  
9.26.07  
Houston Hall – Ben Franklin Room

Exec board present: all  
Student reps present: Shawnika Hull, Roger Turner, Tim Shokair, Lucas Champollion, Amy Fuller, Nikki Kabra, Prem Patel, Lauren Mattern, Alisa Tu, Gina Calzaferri, Jennifer Johnson, Francis Ellis, Christopher Thomas, Jamie Ford, Christopher Morse, David Flynn, Jiyeon Kim, Jacqui Simonet, Brian Coleman, Veronica Moorman, Robin Levine, Katie Farrell, Page Crew, Nicole Izzo, Amy Lan, Ishan Chatterjee, David Chao, Greg Gilbert, Jennifer Akpapuna, Ben Shiller

Our Vision

Dan: GAPSA exec board met and had a leadership retreat and discussed a little about our vision as to what GAPSA is all about. We came up with a unifying mission statement: the new GAPSA: a unified force, empowering students and redefining the graduate experience. The reason why we say unified is b/c last year we had 2 governments, and this year it’s up this year’s board to set the tone.

The Octobus

Kara: This year we have a big initiative, the Octobus. So what we have coming around is the brochure, the most current one from Penn Transit. This is something that you all should know about, what they provide for you and your constituents. So in here you can see the route that Penn Transit covers, it only goes up to 20th. The reality is that there is a large proportion of graduate students live in Center City and live beyond 20th. One of the disadvantages of going to an urban campus like Penn is crime. There was a story in the DP yesterday about the guy who was robbed in a taxi. So that just underscores this need for safety. What we’re trying to establish with the Octobus is give hard and fast proof that this is really necessary, that students will ride and take advantage of an extended shuttle. So it’s more of a shuttle than a bus…it’ll seat maybe 12-15 people. Basically we’ll be collecting data on ridership, 6pm-3am (6-midnight = loop; midnight-3 = door to door service). Now Alina and I have been talking about creative ways to promote the Octobus.

Alina: Some of the things we’re thinking of doing will be highlighted in upcoming emails. Signs, articles (we are sponsoring their crossword and Sudoku), facebook ad, flyers in various school folders, press releases for individual school newsletters, try to tie this in with various events. Like we’ll try to tie this with taking the Octobus back from the pub, etc.

Kara: One of the challenges with graduate students is that there is no really collective way to get info out to all 12,000 of us. And here’s where we are asking for your help. We ask each of you to talk to the people who are key influencers and get the word out to people.

Ben: Just a comment. We often have these emails that we send out to constituents. Can we make a flashier version?

Christa: People in the med school don’t get HTML, so having a flashier version will just make it not show up.

Shawnika: How about just sending an email out just about Octobus, and that’s it. Part of the problem is clutter.

Question: So how is this different from the transit service already in place?
Kara: More hours so that students can come back to campus or go home at a later time safely, extended route to Broad.....we’ve put the dollars behind this and hopefully it will show administration that this is important.

Dan: This is definitely something that has been pushed as important in the past and we feel strongly about it. Can I get the temperature in this room about it? What do you all feel about it?

Lucas: I think this is great that we are doing, and I would’ve funded this last year. But waiting 45 minutes is not very nice.

Nikki: What do you do if you want to come back from center city to campus?

Dan: 898-RIDE

2 of the stops are indoor stops, so you won’t be alone. That’s why we chose those 2 spots.

Lauren: Do we want to push this as a call up service or a route? If this is a call up service than there may be no point to push the route if we don’t even know when the bus will come.

Dan: This is more a route. The reason why it’s so important that we fill this up is b/c the administration is looking at this bus, and they will be seeing if there is a strong need for it.

Jennifer: Given that this starts next week, it’s gonna be crucial for us to do whatever it takes for us to get the ridership up the initial 3-4 days. If you feel that it’s not working and need a call to arms, then do so, so that we can help promote it.

Dan: All we need to do is fill the van up every time it leaves for center city. It’ll help us determine the peak hours and locations.

International Council Applications

Anne: I want to explain what the background is on this. Part of the new GAPSA is a new focus on international and pluralism councils. We want to find ways to improve things for international students. If you know anyone who would be interested, then please forward this call. The whole thing is explained is on the GAPSA homepage, and the link for the application is up too. I’m looking for 10-15 people who want to address issues of internationalization and have ideas.

Policy Council Appointments

Christa: Over the month of August, policy council chairs and I conducted interviews and made our selections for the policy councils. Someone needs to make a motion to approve the appointments.

Dan: Does anyone have any comments/concerns about any of the appointments?

Chris Thomas – move to approve
Jamie Ford – 2nd
All in favor: unanimous

Approving Deputies

All those in favor: unanimous

Budget
Victor: I can imagine looking at numbers and you don’t know exactly what they mean, so I’m gonna give you some context, and hopefully we don’t have too many objections so that we can get this done in a jiffy.

2006 – GAPSA and GSAC were separate, so one of the first things in 2007 was to merge the two, so that’s one of the biggest changes.

From the top (2006-07):
$255,000 student fees
$151000 GAPSA surplus
About $27000 for administration
About $100,000 for grant funding
- interdisciplinary fellowships: GAPSA + Provost teamed up to award teams for interdisciplinary work over the summer time; we fund half of them
- event funding: I’ll give you more background on this too
- GISAC: giving student organizations some kind of operational budget

Social budget $100,000 includes all the GAPSA social events that you’ve seen so far
Student activities: more tailored events, smaller groups of people, also covers GradFest
Public relations: website, publicity, t-shirts
Policy councils: what do we do about transportation, safety, etc.
Professional council: led by Neal; last year we focused on travel grants alone; the new thing we added is some money set aside to explore other issues that prof. students face and how we can address them
Research council: in 2006 was $0, b/c of the separation of the 2 govts. now GSAC is matching $45000

Just to summarize:
1) We’re spending less than last year, and that’s incredible; last year we were 36 and this year we’re close to 60, and we’re maintaining the budget
2) We allocated funds to individual schools so they can decide how they want to spend their money; and GAPSA will focus on interdisciplinary events
3) Student programs: we’re maintaining the same budget but improving the number of programs; we are doing more with less; and the other part of it is that these are just numbers; everything GAPSA spends money on is value; so in addition we are going to step up money for all these events so that they are worthwhile. I want to encourage you all to be GAPSA’s eyes and ears…tell us if there’s things that can be done better.

Jennifer: Do you have a breakdown or do we have to get the info from individual schools as to how much they have?

Victor: The money was transferred somewhere so we can follow it. It is an issue, and we’re going to make the figures public. Your school will also be getting a letter for OSL.

Lucas: About the website, I understand that GAPSA has poured a lot of money into the website, and it hasn’t really worked out, and the strategy seems to be pouring more money into it.

Victor: It’s not pouring more money, it’s money from last year. This is a piece-meal contract.

Alina: It seems like historically that has been the fact. We’re just finishing up the work done from last year. The website is working now, it’s a flexible way to post events and update. This isn’t so much my work as my predecessor, but I feel like the money stops here. This should be it. And this money was allocated last year out of the contract, so we’re not allocating more money.

Roger: It’s interesting that the amounts are similar this year to last year. Will we be seeing more of a return?
Dan: We’ve raised our fees up and kept 75% of the new fee, which is about the same as what we used to have. 30% went immediately into the school. We only have 1 administration fee this year. We’re running the line tight, like Victor said.

Christa: You have to account for the fact that GSAC’s budget is not listed here. So it’s a huge cut.

Lucas: I move to approve the budget.
Nikki: 2nd
Show of hands, all in favor: unanimous

Robert’s Rules of Order

Dan: Scott Brodsky is by far one of the foremost experts on this, so let me introduce Scott!

Scott: It’s really nice to see some familiar faces and see that things are running ok.

We’ll make sure a primer is sent out.

The big fat book in gold cover is the only current authorized version of Robert’s Rules of Order (RROO).

Now how many of you are familiar with parliamentary procedure? Ok, about half of you.

Parliamentary authority: the one used by GAPSA is the book mentioned above
Dan will call meeting to order; VC for Ops will take attendance and let assembly know quorum is present.
Quorum: the minimum # of people present to have approval passed. GAPSA = majority of prof. students and majority of research students present, reps from at least 7 schools, and 3 exec members
Minutes: usually not read aloud; becomes the official record of what happens in meetings; you have a chance to have the records corrected once the minutes are sent out via email
Recommendations are voted on by the group at the end of the particular reports
Unfinished business
New business
Adjourn: finish the meeting; pack your stuff, go home
Recess: take a short break; if you have a particularly grueling session; usually 5 mins.
Debate: people make motions, proposed by members of meeting to take an action; “I move that the GAPSA budget be approved” formerly puts budget in front of assembly; you really should wait until person who is talking is finished and raise your hand to get Chairman’s attention and make a motion; all motions have to be 2nded → just call out “2nd”; the chair then states the question “will the GA recess for 5 minutes?”; then go into debate whether GA will go into recess or not; if out of order, Chair must explain why; you can make a debate twice in one session for 10 mins. at once, no reserving minutes; limits can be changed by 2/3 vote

Again, it’s very early and not a lot of hot-button issues have come up yet, but they will. And this will ensure that discussion occurs in an orderly fashion.

Motion must be germane. Debate issues, not personalities. Under no circumstances can you question or attack motives of another member. Once you cross that line, no one cares whatever you said before, all your good points.
You move the previous question once debate goes on, only in certain circumstances
Amendments: modify a motion; “I move GA recess for 5 mins.” said by one person can be amended to “I move GA recess for 10 mins.” by another person
When you make motion to amend,
First vote = whether or not to amend
2nd vote = whether or not to adjourn

To change your mind/correct mistakes done before: motion to reconsider
Can only be made by someone who voted on winning side of motion; can only be made on same day that it was sought to reconsider, so only until the end of the meeting

Motion to rescind: after meeting ended to correct wrong decision; 2/3 vote or majority vote, whichever is smaller # at the time; if previous notice is given then majority vote required

Voting: majority vote needed to adopt a motion; 2/3 vote may be required to limit/extend debate; some motions require approval of entire membership; some are more simple → motion to adjourn will be more of a voice roll than a tally

Raise a point of order: call attention to Chair; “so and so incorrectly stated their motion”; each member can only speak once; Chair can speak twice to open and close debate

Parliamentary inquire: call this when you don’t know what is going on.

It is the duty of the chair to response. But the chair’s answer is not a ruling and not subject to appeal.

Let’s say Jennifer doesn’t want something to happen. She’s not allowed to make all sorts of motions to delay the process; these are called dilatory.

Improper motions: motions that conflict with the GAPSA constitution, bylaws, Penn laws, and local, state, and federal laws.

RROR is just a guide. It exists to help meetings run more smoothly and make executive decisions in dicey situations.

Lucas: can you mention friendly amendments?

Scott: it’s sort of a misnomer. Amendments are not friendly or non-friendly. Amendments are amendments. Let’s say that I made a motion that was really unreasonable, then Lucas might say, let’s make this more reasonable. If I support that amendment, then usually we’ll just accept it w/o a lot of debate. It usually makes things flow a little bit more smoothly.

Dan: Open forum. Your chance to voice any issues/comments/questions/compliments.

Christa: Are any of the reps are having trouble sending emails out to listservs?

Dan: Work with Alina. Same with financial implications, please talk to Victor.

Henna: Please bring me your certification forms!
Anne: international council applications

Kara: policy council meetings, push the Octobus please!

Alina: website, Octobus, email, the usual

Jessica: alina made these salmon colored flyers for Moshulu. First 300 people get free drinks.

Wenny: philly zoo trip oct. 7, discounted Renoir exhibit oct. 13, haunted house oct. 30
Victor: if you have any problems getting money for school events, please let me know; we have a process for addressing that; keep an eye out for GAPSA events

Andrew: academic policy council, first meeting oct. 8; if you know anyone interested in sitting on that, please shoot us an email

Christa: pluralism council; I’ve met with several cultural center directors on campus

Neal: professional council had a packed meeting today; we came up with subcommittees and will be

Dan: Vet, Dental, SP2, Law do not have a rep for UC yet. Ride the octobus often!

Entertain motion to adjourn.

Jamie: move!
Chris: 2nd!
All in favor: Aye!

Meeting adjourned: 8:59pm