GAPSA General Assembly Meeting
Houston Hall – Ben Franklin Room
Dec 5th, 2007

Exec members present: all except Anne Arnold and Wenny Lin
Student Reps present: Roger Turner, Tim Shokair, Lucas Champollion, Vicky Doan-Nguyen, Stephanie Milk, Leslie Warden, Amy Fuller, Nikki Kabra, Prem Patel, Lauren Mattem, Mat Abramsky, Jennifer Johnson, Tyler Zimmerman, Jamie Ford, Lindsay Holmes, Christopher Morse, David Flynn, Jacqui Simonet, Tammer Faid, Janine Everett, Robin Levine, Brian Coleman, Alejandro Hagan, Carey Tamburino, Brittany Neal, Nicole Izzo, Gregory Gilbert, Ray Edwards, Brent Glover

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

Dan: Good evening everybody. Great to see everyone at the last meeting of the year. We have 2 guest speakers, Dr. Max King and Dr. Evelyn Wiener to talk about SHS and what is going on there. Later we will hear from Jason Karsh.

Student Health

Dr. Wiener: I’m here to tell you about what does Student Health Services do and what you need to know about it. We’re moving to a new location in June. There was a brochure about SHS included in the insurance packet mailed out to every student. It has what you need to know about SHS, where it is, and how to set up an appointment. SHS is a general medical center for students of the university. All full time students are automatically eligible. You pay a clinical fee or the university insurance plan satisfies the clinical fee. We have primary care, sports medicine, women’s health, nutritionist services, and a podiatrist - who is one of the most popular providers we have. Also, we have a nursing service that offers wound care check and works under protocol, giving allergy and immunization injections. Also, we have public health programs and requirements for immunization. If there is a case of Tb, MRSA or any other communicable disease, we make sure infections don’t spread rapidly thru the university. We offer some teaching in clinical areas. Medical and nursing students can apply for clinical rotation at SHS. We don’t have any vet or dental rotations yet. SHS operates on an appointment basis preferentially - this was recommended by students. If SHS were walk-in then students could wait anywhere between 5 min or 2 hr. Then the waiting room fills up and everyone ends up going to SHS at the same time of day. This is not good for patient satisfaction or for our staff with a waiting room full of angry students. So we eliminated walk-ins. If you call, you can usually get into an appointment that day, w/in 24 hr. We see about 250 students per day, and this is gradually and steadily increasing. We are limited by number of rooms available and the efficiency in/out of room. There are issues of privacy, and our current location offers no place to go. There aren’t enough rooms and the waiting rooms don’t have enough seats. We have a fabulous staff though. The doctors are being recruited by friends on staff and they want to work here because of their career choice. If there is an issue with the service received, there are mechanisms to provide feedback. On website, you can give us feedback and it will take you to the SHS mailbox. The feedback is monitored and I will respond to it. We don’t always know if something needs fixing unless it’s brought to our attention. We are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. We maintain safe quality care and there are systems in place to ensure this. If there is an issue about patient safety or quality of care, you can issue a complaint to the Joint Commission. There are 3500-4000 institutes of higher education and 1500 have health services. This can be from a nurse there for 2 hr/day to a full scale hmo provider. Of the 1500, 26 are accredited by the Joint Commission. 126 schools have chosen to go with a less rigorous accreditation with the American Accreditation HealthCare Commission. We are planning to move to 3535 Market Street. It’s 6 minutes from 36th and Locust which is the same as the 6 minute walk from Penn Tower to 36th and Locust walk.
Christa: When will SHS be advertising the move to the students?

Dr. Wiener: The information is on the website. We have talked to the advisory board about how we will get students transitioned to the new area. We can get your input. We are scheduled for occupancy in June, but we are unsure if it will be the beginning, middle or end of June. The contractors being driven to be ready for occupancy by June 1st.

Christa: Maybe you should put a sign in Student Health now so people will begin to think about it now.

Max: Spring semester, will you have a campaign?

Dr. Wiener: Things in DP. We want to send less emails to students. We can have the university mail it out on our behalf. Or a monthly update. The advisory board is cyclic in getting people involved. Student led group. Undergrad and grad.

Christa: Policy council did not know about this. Can you talk to them?

Dr. Wiener: We are more than doubling the square footage to 24000. There will be 2 exam rooms for each provider that is separate from their own office which is industry standard. We want to centralize as much as possible so all the check in kiosks will be in the same area - immunization, allergy, insurance workstations together. There will be a separate waiting area and a group patient education area directly off of the main reception area. Also, there will be a patient counseling office, individual patient counseling and hiv counseling with a dedicated counselor. Also there will be a nutritional counselor.

Neal: For the HIV test, you don’t get the results for 2 weeks which would make someone worry. In center city, there is a 20 min wait.

Dr. Wiener: There they do the rapid test done and negative. If it’s positive, you still need a western blot. We send the blood test to HUP. The basic screen is done and a confirmatory test w/western blot. CDC says everyone ages 13-80 should be screened for HIV. There are 2 barriers to screening on a large scale. You need to come back for results and cost. Confidentiality and anonymous testing are what many people prefer. We can’t do anonymous testing. We can tag the documents so we don’t release the document with the info on it. There is a difference between confidential and anonymous. We should make it free or low cost so it is not a barrier. The oral test is 8 dollars. We should be doing the rapid test for screening. Then we could screen everybody to pick up people you wouldn’t suspect. We need to look at risk factors and clinical presentation. If HIV might be measured, then we go to the hospital based blood test.

J: What if you had an event with rapid testing where students could take a number and have the test done. This would be for people who wouldn’t normally go to SHS for the test.

Dr. Wiener: We need to do pre and post test counseling. We need to have an HIV counselor per PA law. These personnel will come along once we are in the new building. There will be more info on the SHS on webpage.

Dr. Wiener: All full time students are required to have health insurance. We don’t care what kind as long as it meets criteria for medical care in the Philadelphia area, inpatient and outpatient mental health, at least 500k lifetime max benefit, and cannot exclude coverage for preexisting conditions. Emergency only is not good enough. Students must submit this info about insurance
every year. If you don’t submit this info, you are enrolled in the SHS plan. About 8500 enrolled including 400 dependents. It covers significant issues and has an in network 250 deductible before the plan pays benefits. This is to keep premiums low. If there were no deductible, then the plan would cost more. There is a copay for most things after the deductible. It has a lifetime max of 2 million. Highest amount paid was 700-800k so far. The prescription benefit is unlimited. A referral is required if in the Philadelphia area. You must start at SHS to authorize care. Referrals are good until August 31st of that year. If you start in the emergency room, you still need to come to SHS because the emergency room is not part of SHS.

Andrew: But most students don’t know this, especially if students get the referral in August.

Dr. Wiener: A paper is given when you get a referral, and it states when the referral expires. We will send out an email to students in the future with info and basic faq on the PSIP.

Andrew: Maybe you could send it out before the end of the year

Katie: Can you talk about the HPV vaccine?

Dr. Wiener: The HPV vaccine is an effective, safe, medical merit. It doesn’t replace routine well women exams. In this country HPV, especially strains 16 and 18, can clear from the body on their own. In most people, the virus leaves the system and does nothing. There is inadequate info, but we think this vaccine is good. At this point, we are encouraging but not marketing it. The question is, how to pay for it? Pharmaceutical manufacturers’ marketing campaigns are enormous but it ignores the question of how to pay for it. The vaccine was first marketed in late 2006 and we are not rushing to include it. We don’t want to introduce it and soon after withdraw it if there are significant side effects. We want to wait until we are fairly comfortable with the side effects. There is interest by the students but not a huge interest was presented to the committee. It wasn’t clear what impact would be, what the desire would be, if it would escalate premiums now and as utilization went on. We want to see the experience of utilization and cost with schools that do offer it. There is a strong sense that student do want this. GAPSA will put out a survey to see how much students are willing to pay or it even if they are not benefitting from it. It is not feasible to pose a pre-matriculation requirement to have the HPV vaccine. The issue is how to cover a vaccine that is not mandatory. What are the priorities of the students?

Roger: 6% of grad students have children. What do you offer in terms of pediatric services?

Dr. Wiener: There is no pediatric care. But you can cover spouse, dependents, an eligible child under age of 16. We have practitioners certified to handle neonates, but we’re not fully equipped for it. CHOP is excellent. You don’t need a referral for a dependent or a spouse. Only for you.

Christa: Can you comment on the rising price of birth control?

Dr. Wiener: Blame the government. There had been a provision in the pharmaceutical regulation that permitted pharmaceutical manufacturers to sell contraceptives at college health services at a discounted rate. The costs were subsidized through the federal government. This included brand name drugs and nuva rings. The government passed the federal deficit reduction act last fall which removed government subsidies from different clinics. Starting December 2006, students could no longer get birth control pills at the discounted price, which was 8 to 10 dollars per month. We sold all of our stock. We can find generic pills for 15 a month. Nuva rings are only brand name, so they are 35 dollars. There is legislation to try and reverse the
act. PSIP covers oral contraceptive pills. A 30 day supply is for 15 dollars generic or a 30 day supply brand name for 30. Now there are mail orders too.

Dan: With that, the UPenn alert system. In case of emergency, a text message and email will be sent. 10% of the Penn population is signed up. How do we make more people aware of it? Should we make it a requirement as part of registration to say yes or no to participate? They are willing to put the privacy policy right up there. Do I have a motion for a GAPSA resolution, a more credible opt-in, opt-out program?

Mat Abramsky: motion, but also a popup when you log into Penn InTouch to help remind students

Jonathan Lukens: second

Andrew: For incoming or all students?

Dan: all students

Alina: We have to remember the Patriot act which requires international students to give over their phone numbers

Dan: everything will be disclosed in the privacy act

Lucas: What does this mean?

Dan: The federal government can listen in, get your phone #, find out who you called

Dan: 26 yea, 0 nay, 4 abstain, motion passes

Dan: Now the oral rapid HIV test. It is a political battle with administration. Should we give a resolution for Dr. Wiener to push the administration? Should people have it available?

Janine: What is the accuracy?

Dan: No false negatives (Editors Note: Not stated in the meeting but the OraSure test is 99.3% sensitive. In a trial of 767 patients it had only 5 false negatives), only false positives

Leslie: There is a 2 wk turn around with OHE and it is on campus

Dan: OHE does massages, stress relief, alcohol training. We can do this with SHS, OHE or both. The issue is do we want the oral rapid test.

Andrew: People will want to know right away. This solution doesn’t solve the problem if you only offer the test once or twice.

Tammer: We should make it as easily available as possible. It should be available 365 days a year and most students would pay if it’s under 10 dollars

Leslie: Still it is important to have a set day or event to get the students who wouldn’t normally go to SHS for the test
Lucas: The administration should offer the rapid HIV every day of the year as well as during certain action days/weeks to motivate students who would otherwise not take the test. Why is there a political battle? The test seems like common sense.

Dan: Money is the issue. Money would be lost on western blots and lab tests if the test were given to us at cost.

Dan: The motion is for a rapid HIV test available 365 days a year at cost and for a few outreach days a year.

Tammer Farid: second.

Kara: It would be easier to be completely anonymous if we have a set day and don’t even have to go through SHS.

Dan: You would need to show your Penn card to limit the test to the Penn community. We’re trying to find a way to make it completely anonymous.

Roger: Penn students would be worried if they are beyond their stipend that their insurance would know if they were HIV positive and deny them insurance.

Christa: I recommend getting it off campus since there is a difference between confidentiality and anonymous.

Alina: How do we find out about off campus testing?

Christa: There is a link on the SHS website.

Dan: The motion is for a rapid oral HIV test at cost available 365 days a year and a couple of outreach days.

Kara: Can we amend and attempt for the outreach days to be anonymous.

Lucas: ok.

Jennifer: And you are required to go see a counselor if the test is positive.

Dan: Pennsylvania law requires you to go to pre and post counseling.

Kara: If the test is available 365 days per year, it is hard to be anonymous, but if it is only once or twice a year and you flash your Penn card, it is more anonymous.

Dan: 29 ok, 0 nay, 1 abst, passed.

UA NYT Proposal

Dan: Now we have the chair of the Undergraduate Assembly, Jason Karsh.

Jason: We have an idea for students to get free NY Times. We have raised 21000 dollars and ran a trial and got great feedback. Right now the supply is only where undergrads are. We are looking for funding from GAPSA or to lobby the GSC and schools. Also, which locations would be better for grad students to benefit.
Christa: The UA is big on environmental issues. Paper copies vs free online

Jason: We would put recycling bins next to the paper stands. Reading news online versus in print is different. Trade studies show people tend to read a paper and not online

Leslie: How much money is needed for this?

Jason: We would put copies in specific buildings around campus

Jason: The budget is 21k per semester, 700 copies a day, Monday through Friday in as many locations as possible. The UA got people to put up the pilot sponsorship. That would be 40 cents a copy. Now 3000, later bulk of cost covered by GA

Jason: The bulk would be college houses, mostly in undergrad areas

Dan: What about Sansom place?

Jason: No one has gotten back to me, but the college houses are set to go

Lucas: The NY Times has topics relevant to higher education and is good for grad students. How much would we put up?

Jason: The program will start January 16th but is flexible and you can come to us about it

Andrew: Will it be available in the summer?

Jason: No, only during the school year and not during breaks

Dan: What is the ballpark money you are looking for?

Jason: We won’t know until GAPSA is in the model and then we can figure it out

Jason: 40 cent divided by 7, UA is paying 1/7th

Dan: So you have money raised for this semester, you are just now looking for extra papers

Jessica K: If you put them in public locations, you have to make sure that only students get them since we are concerned about money

Leslie: Other schools have a swipe card system. Maybe we should investigate how they do it

Jennifer: If we broaden it to the Penn community, we can tap into their resources. Maybe we can monitor that to lessen costs for the students

Lucas: We need price tags attached to it so we can make an informed decision

Dan: is this we want to do, exec to do? Money?

Christa: We should go to the schools and see if they want to contribute more to it and say which buildings they want to put them in
Neal: Do we have to do this by January? This will take a long time to approve at Wharton.

Leslie: Is it worth looking into a corporate subscription online? The free online version doesn’t have everything.

Dan: We do get it in lexus nexus but not in a good format.

Jacqui: What do we have in the budget?

Victor: We have some money.

Dan: We can easily take extra money.

Carrie: We could start off putting 10 copies in GSC?

Dan: GSC already gets one copy, and the grad towers concern is they won’t get copies.

Christa: What does 1000 dollars get us?

Dan: If they get each copy at 6 cents we should try it. They got benefit from our Octobus.

Kara: If we pay 40 cents, 42 copies a day. If we pay 6 cents, we would get 200+ copies per day.

Mat: We ought to pursue it, but we should get 2 people to do the math and details.

Dan: Who is interested in the exec board pursuing it? 16 yea, 6 nay.

Neal: So we are empowering the exec board to spend a certain amount of money, and get as many papers as possible. UA will be frustrated if we go back and forth until February. We should put a dollar amount on the table.

Christa: Motion to put 1000 dollars out for it.

Roger: second.

Neal: Friendly amendment. UA is spending 3000. There is 50/50 undergrad to grad. What if we triple it?

Christa: Fewer people will actually use the papers and we have less money than the UA.

Jessica: Some people don’t even come to campus.

Andrew: Do they need our help? If don’t need help, are they simply offering it to us to get on board. If so, then we won’t benefit or harm them.

Kara: We can get it at Sansom and work with Jason.

Leslie: They are reaching out to us not to them. Still it will be 40 cents for us per paper. They got it at 6 cents each due to fundraising.

Dan: They don’t need our funding. They need graduate support to make it a permanent thing.
Roger: Can we move to vote on it

Dan: Motion to give power to exec board to work with UA with a cap of 1000 max and to negotiate the best price possible

Neal: Competing amendment to double it. It is hard to negotiate at 1/3rd of what they are offering

Leslie: Why should we negotiate with them when we can get it at cost without them. 40 cents is the academic cost

Christa: Prefer not to have 3000 dollars

Leslie: second Neal’s amendment

Mat: Do we have 2000 dollars to do this

Dan: yes

Christa: But we have 1/3 their budget

Dan: 2000 dollar amount? 7 yea, by sight motion fails

Dan: Should we allocate 1000k, give exec board power? 19 yea, 7 nay, 4 abstain, motion carries

Working for GAPSA Guidelines

Alina: We want to make sure you know what you can and can’t do when working with GAPSA. I will send out email with these.

Do: Introduce yourself as a member of GAPSA and introduce the project you are working on. Be polite, keep good notes, report back to your project supervisor. Spending money: check with your project supervisor, keep an itemized receipt or you can’t be reimbursed, only spend on authorized purchases, and don’t exceed the amount allotted. Don’t assume roles and titles you don’t have. Don’t use the GAPSA name for personal events even if you paying for it. Don’t contact high ranking university administrators without permission of Dan or Alina. Dan is our rep to everybody and it will be confusing if there are many too many reps in contact. Don’t contact the press with exciting news of GAPSA meetings. Don’t make agreements or contracts that you don’t have the authority to do. Don’t use confidential GAPSA info for personal research/projects.

Dan: If you have any questions, email Alina. These issues actually did happen

Town Hall Meetings

Dan: Spring semester at each school, recruit for next exec board and GA. Lunches, promote GAPSA. Exec board will help and support

Exec reports

Andrew: only for research council
Jessica: There is a happy hour at law school tomorrow, organized by Lindsey

Lindsay: There will be food from Qdoba. It’s from 5-8 and we want to get law students more involved with GAPSA

Christa: There was a diversity and equity meeting this week. We discussed campus climate and how do you feel about your experience here at Penn, which were discussed at length

Alina: Off campus housing landlord survey. Advertising for interdisciplinary due at end of March

Victor: We are below budget. We have delivered more programs. The GAPSA audit exercise will be in January. If there are problems w/funding w/in schools, bring it to my attention. There’s a subcommittee and finance committee in place for this.

Kara: Landlord survey, SHIC survey, Student Health advisory board, new services at new facility, airport shuttle we are trying to have for winter break

Dan: We got octobus approved. It runs 10 pm to 7am. It will drop you off at your door, between market to south street to broad. It’s a huge huge success, thanks Kara and the entire team

Neal: The professional council is doing more with more, since it’s our 1st semester. We are bringing Graduate Leverage in February, and they will discuss retirement planning, mortgage counseling. We are planning a leadership retreat over a weekend, not many details yet and this will involve research students

Henna: If you are not receiving GA emails, let me know. Turn in signed cert of appointment sheets. Directory is up. Name tents are made but they say Wharton all over them. Will remake them

Andrew: If you are interested in sitting on a research review committee, let me know

Dan: 5 min to meet with committees and get ice cream and then we’ll adjourn!

Meeting adjoumed 9:01 pm