Purpose of GAPSA and the Executive Board

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) is the coordinating student body charged with representing all graduate students enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania. GAPSA’s primary focus is to empower the graduate student body through funding, programming, and academic resources. The GAPSA executive board shall develop and execute a strategic vision for GAPSA, improve student life, and facilitate through the general assembly, the representation of the graduate and professional student body, according to the constitution.

Time Commitments

Attendance at biweekly meetings of the General Assembly; organization and leadership of small committees associated with each Chair; attendance at biweekly meetings of the Executive Board; attendance at 2-3 weekend executive board leadership retreats; occasional meetings with administration throughout the academic year; occasional additional meetings with committee members; routine email correspondence with administration and constituents.

Overview of Executive Board Duties

President:
- Serves as the face of GAPSA to the administration, providing updates and accomplishments;
- Collaborates on special projects (i.e. alumni relations, Penn Rec relationship);
- Sets the agenda and runs the meetings of the general assembly.

Vice President:
- Plans GradFest (~1 week of events at the beginning of the academic year);
- Oversees executive board meetings;
- Plans and executes executive board retreats and transitional retreats;
- Administers the President Gutmann Leadership Award.

Chair for Communications:
- Updates the GAPSA website with funding information and deadlines, events, meeting schedules, and executive board information;
- Writes and sends a weekly newsletter to the GAPSA listserv for events on campus or in the community that are of interest to graduate students;
- Maintains the GAPSA Facebook page, monitors student engagement;
- Assists in the promotion of GAPSA to incoming students.

Chair for Equity and Access:
- Serves as the co-chair of the IDEAL Committee with the Chair for International Affairs;
- Places students on University Committees and monitors their participation, in a timely manner;
- Coordinates advocacy campaigns (i.e. lactation spaces);
- Organizes and executes elections in collaboration with the Chair for Operations.

Chair for Finance:
- Administers three funds available through the Finance Committee (student group funding, G12 synergy fund, and the discretionary fund);
Disseminates financial policies and information as needed;
Monitors the BEN financials from all GAPSA accounts and disseminating as needed.

Chair for International Affairs:
- Serves as the co-chair of the IDEAL Committee with the Chair for Equity and Access;
- Serves as the graduate student representative for the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) and the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS);
- Plans annually for events supporting international students obtaining state identification;
- Plans biannually for welcome transportation service from the airport to campus destinations.

Chair for Operations:
- Plans the meetings of the general assembly and sends out the agenda in advance;
- On an annual basis, obtains census data for each of the graduate schools;
- Serves as the primary contact for all communication with the general assembly and the G12;
- Allocates and maintains the committee assignments for the GA;
- Organizes and runs elections in collaboration with the Chair for Equity & Access.

Chair for Professional Students:
- Runs the meetings of the Professional Student Council;
- Administers professional travel grants;
- Determines challenges and areas of improvement facing professional students and orchestrates advocacy campaigns for those issues.

Chair for Research Students:
- Runs the meetings of the Research Student Council;
- Administers research travel grants and the academic event fund;
- Administers the GAPSA-Provost Award for Interdisciplinary Innovation;
- Determines challenges and areas of improvement facing research students and orchestrates advocacy campaigns for those issues.

Chair for Social Activities:
- Plans approximately 4 large parties per year, bimonthly happy hours, holiday happy hours/events (i.e. Thanksgiving Dinner, etc.);
- Collects data on student attendance by school, and monitors student satisfaction.

Chair for Student Life:
- Runs the PennShape program to increase the well-being of the graduate student body;
- Advocates to Penn Rec to increase the availability of gym memberships and classes;
- Collaborates with CAPS to increase student awareness of the resources on campus.

Chair for Student Programs:
- Administers funding for programs that promote community-building amongst graduate students, both on and off campus (i.e. Paint Nite, Wharton Fight Nite sponsorship);
- Provides subsidized tickets to graduate students to attend local art and culture programs;
- Plans GAPSA Adventures: smaller targeted events (i.e. wine tasting, dance classes, etc.).

The IDEAL Committee:
- Funds groups through the three-tiered empowerment plan system;
- Holds monthly meetings with attendance requirements to promote collaboration.

Need more information? Reach out to each Chair directly!