Wednesday, 30 March 2022

5:30-6:30PM Professional* and IDEAL* Council Meetings
6:30-8:00PM General Assembly Meeting (DRL BA4)
   Zoom link: https://upenn.zoom.us/j/91963881814
8:00-9:00PM Research Council* Meeting

*Council meeting room/zoom links sent separately in relevant council meeting agendas

General Assembly Minutes

1. Energizer and Call to Order (6:40PM)
   a. Talent Show energizer
2. Approved Agenda (6:41PM)
3. Approved Minutes from 03/16/2022 (6:42PM)

4. Announcements (6:40PM)
   a. GAPSA Midterm survey
      i. Closed, will share data about it soon!
   b. Upcoming programs (EVP)
Alumni Night - Louie Louie 4/8

Spirit of Philadelphia Cruise 4/16 and 4/23 (Sunset Dinner Cruise, Midnight Cruise)

- Spring Gala was great, sold out tickets to event

c. Debrief on 3/18 meeting with interim president and interim provost
   i. How to transition back into in person from Covid
      1. Mask, class recordings, etc.
   ii. Advocating for more space for GAPSA so that people can meet with representatives comfortably
   iii. Still have some topics on queue that were not able to be touched upon there
      1. e.g. supporting students through Ukrainian crisis
5. GAPSA Wellness Information Speaker Series: (6:50PM)  
Lauren Cordova, Health Educator

6. GAPSA Restructuring – presentation, discussion, and vote (7:12PM)  
   a. Why do we care to restructure?  
      
      --> to build a more efficient & accountable GAPSA to enhance the  
      experience of our General Assembly & constituents!

   b. Steering level

   ![Diagram: Restructuring at Steering Level]

   **Current Structure - Key issues:**
   1. The current structure is not informed by the functions of GAPSA  
   2. Work-load balance

   **Proposed Structure – Advantages:**
   1. Structural titles will reflect functions.  
   2. More balanced work-load:  
      • VPs = division managers.  
      • VP of Finance ➔ financial affairs only.  
      • Executive VP ➔ operations only.

   With the goal of a more efficient and accountable GAPSA!
2 – Restructuring at Committee Level:

**Operations Division**

- **Division Manager:** Vice President of Operations
  - Logistics
  - Public Relations
  - Alumni Relations
  - Data Analytics

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2 – Restructuring at Committee Level:

**Finance Division**

- **Division Manager:** Vice President of Finance
  - Fund Management
  - Budget
  - Financial Reporting
Name change from Policy to Advocacy to reflect better the purpose of the division

New positions highlighted in yellow below:
(and names of positions are now more reflective of their function, to make GAPSA more approachable to everyone)
Line of succession: President, EVP, then vote let the Council chairs decide who will succeed after (traditionally this was VPFO)

   1. Amending a proposed amendment is simply getting majority vote
   2. Voted majority to pass, passed!

   d. Technology Amendment
3 – Technology Amendments

- E-Voting
- E-Voting in Elections
- Attendance in Video Conferencing, Teleconferencing, and Video Meetings
- Ownership of GAPSA’s Intellectual Property and Digital Data
- Director of Technology and Innovation

Motion to amend the amendment - change Technology director to “deputy director”

i. Passes

*** Motion to pass the amendment - (takes ¾ to pass)

--> Passes!

7. GAPSA Exec Bylaws – presentation, discussion, and vote (8:07PM)
**Motivation & Bylaws Articles**

1. **Accountability**: set clear expectations and obligations for Executive Board members
2. Facilitate efficient transition and transfer of institutional knowledge
3. Set clear guidelines for elections & officer appointments
4. Outline communicative practices & professional conduct

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Exec Bylaws covers how many meetings exec officers should have, expectations, excused absences, complications, report systems, agendas, minutes, disciplinary actions, who gets votes, etc.

--> setting expectations and standards for executive boards

--> our job is to execute the will of the GA, not set the will (this codifies this)

- Executive compensation
  - Anyone who gets paid has to submit reports, payment withheld otherwise
  - Note that this also opens up the opportunity to lower income students
  - Level 1 – President 2x
  - Level 2 – VP's and Council Chairs 1.5x
  - Level 3 – Directors 1x
  - Level 4 – Deputy Directors 0.5x
  - (x is base, GA will establish base pay “x” every fiscal year)

- Keep election open (everyone can be present during speeches) and deliberation open, can still go into executive office but now the default will be more open

- Defining transition process
Motion to move Executive VP role to Level 1, so their compensation will now be 2x:

- Amendment fails

Motion that everyone is paid the same (Flat pay):

- Amendment fails

Motion to table Exec payment to following meeting:

- Passes

Motion to ratify Exec Bylaws:

- Passes

8. GAPSA Wellness Committee Annual G12+ Wellness Report Presentation
   a. Physical report books passed out
   b. Skipped

9. Research Council: Ph.D. stipend to address financial insecurity - Emily
   a. Stipend survey results presentation
      i. 1200 responses so far, will follow up with schools who do not have many responses so far
Schools:
- School of Arts & Sciences
- Wharton School
- Annenberg School of Communication
- School of Dental Medicine
- Stuart Weissenburg School of Design
- School of Engineering & Applied Sciences
- Graduate School of Education
- Carey Law School
- Perelman School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Social Policy & Practice
- School of Veterinary Medicine

Funding cycle:
- 9-month funding
- 10-month funding
- 12-month funding
- Other (please specify)

Stipend:
- 12-month: As low as $25,000
- 10-month: As low as $25,000
- 9-month: As low as $23,000
- As high as $43,000
- As high as $35,000
- As high as $36,000

Does the stipend adequately meet students’ needs?

Is it urgent to increase doctoral stipends at Penn to keep up with inflation and cost of living?

Do students want to see more transparency regarding stipend data and practices across the university?
Summary on the question: How can GAPSA RC advocate for you? (still ongoing)

- Thus far, nearly every single person mentioned that they want their stipends to increase, keep up with inflation, and they want to see more transparency with regard to how stipends are determined and why disparities exist across schools.

- Many students report worrying about getting pushed out of their housing due to increasing rental costs in Philadelphia.

- Multiple students reported having to choose between purchasing groceries and paying their utility bills.

- Multiple students reported worrying about going deeper into debt.

- Multiple students reported worrying about what they will do when their funding runs out, especially after having lost a year of research progress due to COVID-19
  - Some mention the possibility of dropping out if they cannot acquire external funding, some mention getting an additional job on top of PhD responsibilities.

- Some students mentioned wanting more updates on what GAPSA is doing to advocate for them.

b. Stipend Parity Resolution

What we plan to do:

- We plan to pass a resolution to ask that the university find a way to get every PhD student to $41,000 per year (supplementing what departments, PIs, and fellowships currently pay) for FY 2023
  - This is what Brown achieved recently with $42,000, and their CoL is ~3% higher than ours
- In this resolution we want to mandate that this number keep up with CoL and inflation changes each year.
- In this resolution we want to mandate that this stipend is guaranteed to all PhD students for at least 6 years.

- We plan to pass a resolution asking the university to report on the past three years of stipend data for each department in the meantime.

- We will de-identify the survey and send to G12 presidents so that school governments have more information on how to better advocate for their constituents.
  - Create opportunities to fight at the school level as well

10. Open Floor/New Business/Q&A
a. Elections next meeting!

11. Adjournment (8:55PM)