MEMO

To: Tram Ng
From: Lee Shaker
   Chair, GAPSA

Date: October 16, 2006

Re: GAPSA Status Report for October 18, 2006 University Council Meeting

Community Building Activities

• On Saturday, October 7th, GAPSA led an afternoon trip to the Philadelphia Zoo. Transportation was provided and all available tickets sold out in advance. The day was a family-friendly success, with students from 9 schools participating.

• On Saturday, October 21st, GAPSA is joining Philadelphia Cares Day in the Philadelphia public schools. More than 15,000 volunteers will help to clean, organize, and rehabilitate learning spaces across the city. We are excited to participate in a project that will benefit more than 100 schools across the city.

• On Saturday, October 28th, GAPSA is providing a group of 12 volunteers to help staff a benefit party for Children’s Scholarship Fund Philadelphia. The event, also the grand opening of Urban Outfitters’ new corporate headquarters, will involve a silent auction that Penn grad students will help facilitate.

• GAPSA is excited by the initial success of its relationship with Penn Alexander and Lee Elementary in West Philadelphia. Working with Ann Kreidle, Penn Alexander’s liaison with the GSE, an initial round of recruiting resulted in pairing 15 Penn grad/prof students with teachers in the schools. Later this month, a re-solicit will be sent to the entire grad/prof student body because of the excitement the program engendered among teachers at the schools. GAPSA hopes to establish a durable relationship and is encouraged by the initial progress!

• GAPSA social events were held at Moshulu in Old City and the Dental School in the past month. Both events were attended by students from the full spectrum of graduate and professional schools at Penn, drawing more than 2000 attendees in total. Upcoming events include a Rock, Scissors, Paper tournament, a social hour at the Nursing School, and a dinner at Haru in Old City.

• As of October 11th, GAPSA had allocated just under $7,000 to student groups for programming running the gamut from a fish fry to a workshop on job opportunities. In addition, GAPSA has provided operations funds to seven groups so far this year, including BGAPSA, LaGAPSA, the Turkish Student Association, and the Yan Xin Quigong Club. GAPSA is excited to have increased the amount of funding available to student groups to $80,000 in this year’s newly approved budget—in excess of 15% more than the sum available last year.

Campus Outreach and Education

• GAPSA welcomed Ron Ward from Penn Transit and representatives from Philly Carshare to its assembly meeting on Wednesday, October 11th. Conversation about the two organizations’ services, the transit needs of graduate and professional students, and working together to optimize services ensued for the balance of the meeting. During the next few months, GAPSA will be working to help optimize students’ transit situation.
• Before the end of fall semester, GAPSA will welcome Maureen Rush, Penn’s VP for Public Safety, and representatives from Student Health to its assembly. In addition, one meeting will take place at the Penn Police headquarters at 40th/Chestnut. By directly connecting the assembly and Penn administrators, we hope to strengthen communication from the student body to campus leaders and to help educate the student body about services on campus.

**Facilitating Student Group Formation**

• GAPSA is continuing work with the Office of International Programs and Rudie Altamirano, the new director for international student and scholar services, towards developing an International Students’ Council/OIP Advisory Board. Joint recruitment efforts are beginning and possible configurations of the group are under discussion.

• GAPSA has also been working the LGBT community on campus to bring new life to Lambda Grads. We are excited to have provided some start-up funding, shared a stake in new work space in Houston Hall provided by VPUL, and participated in their communications off- and online as the process proceeds.

**GAPS/CAD: Graduate And Professional Student Celebration and Appreciation Day**

• GAPSA has continued the planning of the inaugural day-long event tailored specifically to graduate and professional students on Saturday, May 5, 2007, to provide a relaxing capstone and celebrate the end of the academic year. The official planning committee held their first meeting on October 11th to discuss the timeline of preparation activities and outreach to stakeholders. There will be a contest for the naming of this event at the end of October, which will be open to all graduate and professional students.