MEMO

To: University Council
From: Daniel Grabell
    Chair, GAPSA
Date: January 30, 2008
Re: GAPSA Status Report for January 30, 2008 University Council Meeting

**GAPSA’s Accomplishments Fall Semester**

- **Center City Shuttle** - GAPSA partnered with the UA and Business Services to create a center city shuttle to provide late night transportation to the University Community. We encourage all community members to utilize this shuttle which picks up at the normal campus bus stops between 10PM and 3AM and drops you off at your door up to Broad Street.  
  [http://www.business-services.upenn.edu/transportation/using/schedules_printable.html](http://www.business-services.upenn.edu/transportation/using/schedules_printable.html)

- **Student Travel Grants** - GAPSA awarded 55 Fall 2007 Conference Travel Grants to 55 research students representing each of the nine research graduate schools within the University as well as several professional travel grants to professional students.

- **Event funding** – GAPSA funded academic and club events representing clubs and groups that impact a wide variety of schools.

- **Funding of the GAPSA – Provost Interdisciplinary Awards** - The GAPSA - Provost's Award for Interdisciplinary Innovation is a prestigious and competitive summer fellowship program that will enable graduate and professional students to integrate knowledge across disciplines. The six winners will receive $2,000 per summer month, as well as eternal fame and recognition. Provost Ron Daniels has graciously agreed to continue to support the program on an ongoing basis. GAPSA is currently seeking applications for Summer 2008.  
  [http://72.249.74.198/funding/fellowships](http://72.249.74.198/funding/fellowships)

- **Community Building Events** -- GAPSA's Social Activities Committee planned and coordinated ten events from September to December 2007, an average of 2-3 per month. The events were aimed to encourage interaction among the diversity of students from all 12 schools at Penn. Some traditional ( Strikes Happy Hour and Moshulu) while others new (Triumph and Salsa), these social and cultural activities attracted from 200 to 900+ graduate and professional students. GAPSA's Student Programs Committee planned and coordinated a number of events aimed to encourage interaction among students at Penn. These social, cultural, sporting, and volunteering activities attracted almost 900 graduate and professional students from the 12 schools.
GAPSA’s Key Priorities for the Spring Semester

• **Financial Support for Ph.D. Students** -- GAPSA will continue to advocate for the financial support Ph.D. students. Currently Penn’s minimum stipend for Ph.D. students is among the lowest in the Ivy League and has not been competitively increased since 2005 as a result student’s purchasing power has decreased for two years in a row. Furthermore the minimum stipend falls short of the expected graduate student budget put together by Penn’s own Student Financial Services. In light of these facts and the significant impact that graduate students have on the entire University community, GAPSA has called on the University administration to restore Penn’s competitiveness by increasing the graduate stipend to reflect at least the average of the Ivy League. We will continue to pursue this goal while also examining funding packages for advanced students.

• **Leadership Retreat** -- GAPSA is partnering with the Vice President of University Life and the Office of Student Life to create an interdisciplinary training program that will allow Penn students to develop the necessary skills to be a better leader at Penn and a stronger Penn alum.

• **Review of the Ph.D. Exit Survey** -- GAPSA is also examining the University’s current “Student Doctoral Opinion Survey” (www.upenn.edu/grad/sdso/sdso.html). For at least ten years Penn’s Institutional Research has been collecting this data as an exit survey for Ph.D. degree recipients. We would like two things: first, to ensure that University is wisely stewarding this valuable information, and second, to review the appropriateness of the questions being used.

• **Recruitment of Minority Students and Faculty** – GAPSA is working to partner with Penn on improving its recruitment procedure of Native Americans graduate student and faculty. In addition, we seek to explore and implement methods to provide support and retention to these teams.

• **Graduate Students with Children** – GAPSA is partnering with the Graduate Student Center and the Provost to help improve the resources made available to students with children. We seek to create programs to support graduate students with children while on the Penn Campus.

• **Graduate Student Housing** – As part of the Penn Connects plan, GAPSA would like affordable graduate student housing that will help graduate students live closer to campus. We continue to work with the University to make this a reality.

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