GAPSA Budget and Funding

The Graduate and Professional Student General Assembly, on Wednesday, October 7, 2009, formally passed the GAPSA budget for FY 2010. GAPSA has the responsibility to, with the approval of the GA, allocate resources to the Graduate and Professional school governments of each of Penn’s 12 schools, and distribute funds for the support of student groups throughout the University. For FY 2010 GAPSA allocated 55% of the total budget ($421,527) to the 12 Graduate and Professional school governments. Additionally, to this point, GAPSA, through the capable direction of Vice Chair for Finance, Ashley Goss (Medicine, PhD), has distributed $27,000, nearly double the amount distributed in the previous fall semester, to cross-campus student affinity groups for fall semester financial support. This additional funding allocation is a direct result of the increased percentage of the general fee that GAPSA received this year from the Provost’s office.

Professional and Research Councils

All members of the GAPSA’s General Assembly sit on either the Professional or Research Council, based on individual standing as a research or professional student. The purpose of each council is to represent the educational and professional needs of their fellow students, as well as to distribute funds for educational programs and travel grants. The Professional Council, under the leadership of Jade Palomino (Law, JD), Vice Chair for Professional Students, has awarded 25 student travel grants, helping the grantees further their professional education through attendance at academic conferences and symposiums. Additionally, the Professional Council funded five academic events, with event topics ranging from comparative literature and architecture, to areas of medicine. Similarly, the Research Council, under the leadership of Henry Friedman (Wharton, PhD), Vice Chair for Research, approved over $18,000 worth of research student Fall travel grants to approximately 50 students, and funded the following academic events: Conference on Animality for $250, the South Asian Regional Studies Student Colloquium for $1,500, and One Health Panel with Professional Council for $300. Often there are academic events that involve both Professional and Research students, and Jade and Henry have been successful on co-funding these events, which was the case for the Conference on Animality and the One Health Panel.

GAPSA Student Program Events

Maher Zamel (Education, EdD), Vice Chair for Student Programs, has created innovative activities and opportunities for Penn graduate and professional students to enjoy Philadelphia. Maher has made available to Penn grad/prof students reduced-price movie tickets for the Bridge, weekly bus transportation from campus to King of Prussia Mall (a huge hit so far, with more students interested than seats on the bus), and dinner opportunities at restaurants like City Tavern.
and El Vez. Additionally, there are plans for Thanksgiving Dinner for students staying on campus during the holiday, theatre and broadway series passes in both Philadelphia and NYC, cultural tours of Philadelphia, and family trips to Linvilla.

**Executive Board Special Election**

Wednesday, October 7, 2009, the Graduate and Professional Student General Assembly elected two students to fill the final two Vice Chair positions dating back to last spring. Varsha Jain (Engineering, PhD) was elected as Vice Chair for International Affairs, and Emily Joy Rothschild (SAS-Music, PhD) was elected as Vice Chair for Student Life. Emily Joy brings significant student government experience surrounding student life issues to the Executive Board. Varsha, a third year international student from India, has hit the ground running and is in the process of organizing the International Council and setting a strategy for meeting the needs of Penn’s international student body. Both Emily Joy and Varsha are great additions to the Executive Board, and are already demonstrating that each is a true advocate for her respective position.

**The Executive Board (2009-2010)**

Chair: Corbett Brown (Nursing, PhD)
Vice Chair: Lee Solomon (Medicine, PhD)
Vice Chair for Communications: Allison Sullivan (SAS, PhD)
Vice Chair for Equity & Access: Michelle Jacobson (Arts & Sciences, MES)
Vice Chair for Finance: Ashley Goss (Medicine, PhD)
Vice Chair for International Affairs: Varsha Jain (Engineering, PhD)
Vice Chair for Operations: David Stein (Engineering, PhD)
Vice Chair for Professional: Jade Palomino (Law, JD)
Vice Chair for Social Activities: David Conklin (Engineering, PhD)
Vice Chair for Student Life: Emily Joy Rothschild (SAS-Music, PhD)
Vice Chair for Student Programs: Maher Zamel (Education, EdD)