Committee Representation

As of December 2009, graduate and professional students had filled all of the university committee seats available. An effort was made to have a balance amongst gender and the 12 schools to ensure an adequate representation of the diverse interests and needs of graduate and professional students. In the spring semester, each representative will provide GAPSA with information regarding their committee’s focus issues as well as regularity of meeting and other pertinent information.

Finance Committee Budget Update

The Fy10 budget allocation for the Vice Chair for Finance and the Finance Committee was $47,100. In the fall, $23,480 and $4,460 (total of $27,940) non-academic event funding and GISAC funding were awarded to 29 student groups. Additional PennNet server fees (GAPSA subsidizes student group list serves) brought the total fall 2009 expenditures to $28,018.56. The remaining budget stands at $19,081.44.

Leadership Series

In previous years, it has been the job of the Vice Chair to plan and administer a leadership retreat in order to develop the leadership skills of students and prepare them for their post graduation career. While in previous years this retreat has been very successful, this year, the retreat has been reformatted as a series of workshops. The series is still a joint venture of GAPSA and VPUL, however this year, help with planning and administration has come from the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs (OFSA). The series will be a set of seven workshops over the course of the spring semester in 2010. Depending on the response from the students who attend, this will be modified to a year-long series in the academic year of 2010-2011. The benefit of this format over the previous retreat is the continual building of skills over the course of a longer period of time than in a single day. The first workshop will be held in February, and there will be one workshop a week.

Travel Grants

During the Fall semester, the Research Council approved $18,000 worth of travel grants to approximately 50 PhD students. This represents a significant increase over the previous year’s funding amount (approximately $15,000), which can be attributed to an increase in the maximum funding level approved by the 2008-2009 Research Council. GAPSA travel grants have become especially important during the economic downturn as department and school budget cutbacks have limited conference presentation funding support for many students.

These are just a few highlights of GAPSA’s work during the Fall, please see our reports section on our website for additional information. www.gapsa.upenn.edu