Ivy Summit

GAPSA Chairman Maher Zamel and three members of the Executive Board represented Penn at this year’s Ivy Summit that took place at Princeton on October 15th through the 17th. Members of the Ivy Summit agreed to construct a unified student life survey. This survey will make it easier for members to measure and compare graduate student experiences across the 9 member Universities. Additionally, athletic facilities and prices were compared among member universities.

Data Gathering – Pottruck Gym

Over the past several weeks, GAPSA has been collecting data on athletic membership fees across the Ivy’s. Information will be shared with President Gutmann and presented during University Council Open Forum sessions. At the moment and from examining the information we have collected thus far, it seems that we not faring as well as our peer institutions that offer for the most part free memberships or much cheaper plans.

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. A meeting with the Office of the Secretary is being scheduled to orient new students with their committee’s and duties.

GradFest 2010

For the first time, GradFest had moved to the Fall semester. Overall the events were very successful at targeting incoming graduate students with over 3000 students participating in the ceremony over the course of 10 days. The events were attended by more professional students than has been traditional and scheduling it seems to work more effectively than in previous years. A committee will be created in January to start preparations for next year’s GradFest.

New Funding Opportunities

Starting this Fall, GAPSA has created a $25,000 fund open to all graduate student groups seeking funding for special events or particular causes. Interested groups are required to present in front of the GAPSA General Assembly. A simple majority vote is needed for money to be allocated to a
particular group. The Law School and the Engineering School have already been allocated $750 and $570 respectively. A list of others requesting GAPSA money is scheduled for this semester.

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