To: Joseph Gasiewski, Office of the University Secretary  
From: Joseph Friedman, GAPSA Chair  
Re: GAPSA University Council Status Report  
Date: September 12, 2011

New Website

On August 30, 2011, GAPSA launched its new website with a university-wide email to all graduate and professional students. The new website (www.gapsa.upenn.edu) was our major summer project designed to facilitate even greater collaboration and interaction among students across Penn’s 12 graduate schools. The site features a number of firsts, including a comprehensive student group database and a G12 student leadership directory, as well as an enhanced event calendar and funding page. Feedback has been terrific. We will continue to make modifications in the weeks and months ahead and would love to hear further input.

- **GAPSA History and University Archives**

  With the help of University Archives, we have gathered a number of helpful documents relating to the origins of Penn graduate student government, which dates back to the early 1950s. An online narrative discusses GAPSA’s early history and modern accomplishments, which include helping to spearhead the creation of the Graduate Student Center, leading the effort to found student governments at the Graduate School of Education and the School of Arts and Sciences, and inspiring new funding awards and travel grants, such as the GAPSA-Provost Interdisciplinary Award: $18,000 per year matched by the Office of the Provost.

- **Student Group Database**

  The new site features an unprecedented graduate student group database. Students, faculty, staff, family, alum, and prospective students now have yet another way of exploring the breadth of Penn’s extra-curricular opportunities. Over 135 groups responded to a GAPSA request over the summer for group details. We arranged group information thematically into 13 categories: recreational, religious, career-focused, performing arts, environmental, etc. A strong majority of the groups noted that they are open to all Penn graduate students regardless of degree program. We hope this will help to highlight the university’s ever-growing number of interdisciplinary events and activities.

- **G12 Student Leadership Directory**

  The site also features a G12 student leadership directory, presenting the contact information of the student government executive board members at all 12 graduate schools. The directory was added in response to student input that it would be wonderful to have a central platform from which one could quickly access the contact details of student leaders across the G12 regarding planning inter-school events and joint research projects. The email addresses of GAPSA representatives will soon be added as well.
GradFest - September 2011

We are thrilled to invite you to GAPSA’s upcoming fifth annual GradFest, a week-long kickoff event for the entire graduate school community. GradFest will feature our first ever speaking engagement (Stephen Dubner, co-author of *Freakonomics*) at Irvine Auditorium on September 26 at 2:00 pm. Other events will include a research award reception, a student activities fair, a screening of the new PhD Comics movie, a multicultural festival and BBQ at College Green, and finally, an end-of-summer party at World Cafe Live.

Orientations and Welcome Reception

Members of the GAPSA Executive Board had the chance to attend and speak at a number of orientations and student activities fairs, including at the Law School, School of Education, and School of Engineering. GAPSA also had the pleasure of helping with the University’s New Student Welcome Reception on September 7, 2011, in conjunction with the Office the President and the Graduate Student Center. The event included keynote speeches by President Gutmann and Provost Price ([DP Article](#)).

GAPSA General Assembly Meetings

GAPSA’s General Assembly meeting schedule for the fall semester was set over the summer. Meetings will be held in the Benjamin Franklin Room of Houston Hall from 6:00-9:00 pm on a biweekly basis. The General Assembly and Executive Board will feature 65 students in total— the same number as last year – from all Penn’s graduate schools. A variable number of students requesting funding will also attend the meetings. We are excited to include a time slot each meeting for university leaders to give brief presentations (ie. representatives from the Office of Student Affairs, Graduate Student Center, Division of Public Safety, etc.) in the hope of making meetings even more interactive and educational. Members of the public are invited to attend as well.

Thank you,

Joseph Friedman  
*Chair, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly*  
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2012  
University of Pennsylvania Law School