FUNDING

GAPSA intends to continue to fund student work that enhances student life at the University of Pennsylvania. GAPSA funding opportunities have historically included Student Group Funding, Professional and Research Student Travel Grants, and the Discretionary Fund. Through Student Group Funding, we will continue to support niche interest groups on campus, with an emphasis on those using funding for alcohol-free events. Through Professional and Research Student Travel Grants, we will continue to support graduate and professional student research, and enable it to be shared on a global scale. Finally, through the Discretionary Fund, we will award campus initiatives that promote interdisciplinary learning and co-curricular cooperation.

We will also pioneer two new funding opportunities this year, the G12 Synergy Fund and the GA Opportunity Fund. The G12 Synergy Fund is available to student governments that partner with other governments or University organizations in collaborative efforts that unify our campus. Priority will be given to those student governments that have made their budget transparent to their constituents and to GAPSA. The GA Opportunity Fund is available to members of the GAPSA General Assembly (GA) that wish to pioneer a creative initiative consistent with the mission of GAPSA. We hope that through our funding initiatives, both old and new, we can continue to incentivize behavior that is beneficial to the University and the student body.

EVENTS

GAPSA continued in its proud tradition of welcoming graduate and professional students back to campus with the successful completion of GradFest. This year, GradFest consisted of a particularly diverse array of events in order to echo the diversity of graduate and professional students on campus. Such events included an academic symposium, a night market, a gala at the World Café, and a Quizzo Picnic for students with families. Throughout the year, we intend to continue to host regularly scheduled themed networking events, while increasing our focus on community service activities.

ADVOCACY

This year, GAPSA advocates for improvements to the following areas of University life: mental health resources, course registration, communication among professional school deans, affinity group representation on University Committees, and the disproportionate representation of international students in honor code violations. These advocacy efforts are expounded upon below.
Ivy Summit 2012 will focus on building mental health resources at the Ivy Plus schools. Representatives from The Nine will lead workshops during this event to educate one another on best practices for meeting students’ mental health needs. GAPSA will take the lead in orchestrating implementation of these best practices at the University of Pennsylvania, as well as at our peer institutions.

To improve the course registration process GAPSA has partnered with University administrators and G-Apps, an organization of graduate student web developers, to agglomerate the University’s available course registration resources, and to create new tools to facilitate the course registration process. GAPSA has also contacted the G12 Deans to survey their interest in a regular meeting to discuss common issues, and to create further co-curricular opportunities.

Through its traditional role assigning graduate and professional students to University Committees, GAPSA has made a conscious effort to enfranchise minorities. Particular effort was made to encourage members of University Affinity Groups to participate in Committees and to have their voices heard.

International graduate and professional students commit a disproportionate number of honor code violations. Research is being done into the cause of this discrepancy, and a plan of action is being designed.

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