GAPSA Status Report for 10/30 University Council

Midway through the Fall Semester, GAPSA’s activities are in full swing. Following the weeklong GradFest celebration, we now focus on extending relationships with the University.

Two key initiatives are currently being implemented in parallel. The Select Committee on Pluralism and International Affairs is actively reaching out to umbrella groups serving graduate and professional students on this campus, in which GAPSA extends support in planning, implementation, and funding. At the same time, the GAPSA Advisory Services is currently being launched as a way to reach out to organizations on campus that utilize GAPSA (University) funding as a way to encourage more collaborative projects, encourage financial transparency, and provide a framework to allow student groups on campus to become more self-sustaining. Both initiatives are part of GAPSA’s broader goals of extending our support to the University populace, and we continue to encourage students and other groups to reach out to us.

As academic and research funding make up the largest portion of GAPSA’s annual budget, our committees continue to receive top-quality applications in large numbers. The Professional and Research Council Travel and Research Grants continue to be one of the chief ways in which GAPSA supports individual and group-based academic endeavors on this campus. Along with academic support, GAPSA has also opened up applications for student group and event funding, and the first round of presentations for funding approval will take place at the next General Assembly meeting on 10/23.

Penn SHAPE, a GAPSA fitness and wellness program open to all Penn graduate and professional students, has successfully launched in its second season and is our flagship program in bringing together the University community through individual and team-based challenges.

Over the course of the next month, GAPSA will begin planning for the G12 Summit, an invitational gathering of student government leaders from all twelve graduate and professionals at Penn. In November, members of the GAPSA Executive Board will also be attending the Ivy Plus Summit hosted by Columbia University. The Ivy Plus Summit is an annual tradition in which graduate student leaders from the greater Ivy community gather to exchange best practices in university governance. We are looking forward to contributing to this year’s theme, which is “Growing Academic Dialogue Across Disciplines.”

GAPSA continues to maintain an open dialogue with students via our website and social media platforms.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steven Lin, Chair of GAPSA