

## School Updates

### *Veterinary school*

The Veterinary School completed the Kresge Challenge one month ahead of the October 1 deadline. The Kresge Foundation of Troy, Michigan agreed to give the School \$1.5 million for the new Teaching and Research building provided it met fundraising challenges. This is the first grant to the University from Kresge since 1998 and is the largest Kresge grant ever to an Ivy League University.

The School is pursuing an initiative in Shelter Animal Medicine with the Philadelphia Animal Care and Control Authority as part of the Urban Agenda of the University. The goal is to use the City of Philadelphia's animal shelter to train veterinary students in spay and neuter procedures as well as the singular challenges of shelter animal medicine.

Studies are in progress to identify the function of the gene responsible for Progressive rod-cone degenerations (*prcd*) in dogs. The disease has a major impact on working dogs, such as Labrador retrievers used as guide dogs for the blind. These studies are to determine if *prcd* is involved in human retinal degenerations and use it as a "marker" to trace the evolution of modern dog breeds. Gene therapy studies are planned for the near future.

### *Law School*

In reforming its curriculum over the past five years, the law school has established four new student and faculty exchange programs with law schools abroad, and added several new certificate and joint programs. As a result, over three quarters of the student body will take classes outside the law school or attend law school classes (co)taught by faculty from other schools by the time they graduate.

Penn Law's admissions success was the subject of a front-page article in the National Law Journal this month, which describes Penn's entering class as the most racially diverse class of any of the top law schools.

The Law School won the Burton Award for Excellence in its Legal Writing Program and the Pennsylvania state architectural award for renovations of Gittis Hall.

### Library

This month, the library debuts PennAlerts, a table of contents service covering some 10,000 e-journals for faculty. The service keeps scholars abreast of the most up-to-date research results and includes features that channel content to individuals using the personal settings in their browsers.

The Library has begun a pilot implementation of its RAPID document delivery system. RAPID will electronically deliver journal articles in a few days when they are not available in our print and digital collections, effectively extending the Library's reach to thousands of additional journal titles. Full implementation is on track for spring 2006

Construction commenced on The David Weigle Information Commons, which will provide wired spaces for students to carry out individual and group research projects and for faculty to experiment with new teaching technologies. The Commons is an example of how we are re-thinking the uses of Library space for the next generation of scholars. The opening date is scheduled for spring 2006.

#### Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers

Three faculty members have been accorded a 2004 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. Professor Kevin Volpp in the department of Medicine, Professor Tejvir Khurana in the Department of Physiology, and Professor Marija Drndic in the department of Physics have all been honored for their research efforts and scholarly promise.

## **UA Status Report**

The Undergraduate Assembly has formed five committees and has begun the substantive work on individual members' projects. The Chair of the Undergraduate Assembly published a guest editorial in the Daily Pennsylvanian outlining the preliminary agenda of the body. The UA is currently in the process of debating the way in which University Council seats are allocated to misrepresented or underrepresented constituencies.

Brett Thalmann

Vice-Chair External Affairs, Undergraduate Assembly

## **GAPSA Status Report**

- GAPSA ushered new graduate and professional students into Penn with a welcome message via email from our Chair, announcing opportunities for involvement, and co-hosted the President's Welcome Reception for new graduate and professional students on September 7 with the Graduate Student Center. Students were welcomed by remarks from President Gutmann, Provost Daniels, and GAPSA Chair Lela Jacobsohn and had access to a University Resource Fair filled with graduate student organizations and services from across the campus.
- GAPSA's beginning of the year social events and student programs have been highly successful. Our Welcome Party at Strikes on September 7 and our Party aboard the Moshulu at Penn's Landing on September 15 each drew over 750 graduate and professional students, generated very positive feedback, and introduced new students to different areas of Philadelphia. Additionally, our Philly Fringe Festival event for Patio Plastico at Cinemagic on September 16 (which sold out) and our World Café Live Lunch Mixer on September 28 (still on sale) offer graduate and professional students an opportunity to get to know others outside of their program as well as subsidized access to cultural assets featured in University City.
- In the context of GAPSA's efforts to further develop the identity of graduate and professional school alumni, in order to increase involvement and participation with this important community as well as to facilitate targeting of graduate and professional student needs in development efforts, Chair Lela Jacobsohn presented a proposal at the Penn Alumni Board of Directors and Council of Representatives Meeting on May 14. The proposal detailed requests for additional representation for graduate alumni on the Board of Directors and on the Council of Representatives, for parity with undergraduate alumni. The proposal was voted upon and approved. The graduate alumni representative for the Board of Directors has already been selected and was included in the Board of Directors September meeting. GAPSA thanks Paul Williams, Gerald Reisenbach, and Penn Alumni for their support, and Bob Alig, Elise Betz, and Development and Alumni Relations for their implementation of the successful proposal.
- In the context of GAPSA's ongoing efforts to establish a family-supportive environment for graduate and professional students (for those who are or are planning to be parents), throughout last year and over the summer, members of GAPSA and GSAC worked closely with the offices of the Provost and the Vice Provost for University Life to secure a part-time fellow devoted to providing accessible and helpful information on student life as a parent (incl. health insurance privileges, dependent care, and university privileges

while on leave) to be delivered publicly on a university website as well as through direct counselling. We are pleased to announce that the fellow has been hired and has begun work, which is based in the Graduate Student Center. GAPSAs continues to work with Provost Daniels and the office of the Provost to inform the work of the fellow and to ensure the needs of graduate student parents and parents-to-be are met and will assist in publicizing this resource to graduate and professional students. GAPSAs offers special thanks to Peter Conn, Janice Bellace, Karen Lawrence, and the Provost's office, Max King and the office of the Vice Provost for University Life, and Anita Mastroieni and the Graduate Student Center for their efforts last year and over the summer.

- Last spring, GAPSAs, GSAC, and the office of Provost together funded the creation of an outdoor space for the Graduate Student Center. GAPSAs and GSAC further contributed funding for furniture and lighting. We are pleased to announce that this terrace project has been completed, is presently in wide use by the graduate and professional student population, and is a valued contribution to the spaces for student congregation on campus.
- In recent years, GAPSAs and the Graduate Student Center have created and partnered to offer a mentoring program for undergraduate students to be paired with graduate student mentors. Together, we are working to expand the program. Already this year, the Graduate Student Center's staff and mentoring fellow have been successful in increasing the number of paired mentors and mentees by 45%. Additionally, over 150 graduate and professional students have volunteered as mentors. GAPSAs continues to focus efforts this year on publicizing the mentoring program to undergraduates including outreach to the UA and SCUE, as well as working with *The Daily Pennsylvanian* on feature stories.
- GAPSAs looks forward to participating in and working with Joanne McCarthy and representatives from the University's constituencies on the Task Force on Global Engagement.
- GAPSAs is pleased to be working with the UA on a joint task force, in collaboration with the offices of the EVP and Facilities, for student input on development of Postal Lands East Campus Expansion. Additionally, GAPSAs looks forward to welcoming Michael Harris and/or Mark Kocent, to an upcoming GAPSAs meeting, which is open to all members of the graduate and professional student population, for a presentation of background information on the East Campus development initiative. When finalized, the date of this meeting will be publicized.

Lela Jacobsohn  
GAPSAs Chair

### **PPSA Status Report**

The PPSA looks forward to a busy year. We will kick off the activities with a PPSA-WPSA jointly sponsored resource fair Monday 10/17/05 on the Perlman Quad.

Some of the main initiatives for PPSA in the 2005-2006 year will be improved communication with monthly paid staff members, working to bring more staff members to University Council, and conducting a needs-assessment survey of our constituents to determine issues that might be

pertinent to University Council. This would also include staff members' ideas for the use of the new Postal Land.

Adam Sherr  
PPSA Chair