

October 19, 2005 University Council Meeting

UA Status Report

The Undergraduate Assembly welcomed 8 new freshman members to the body and is excited that Bing Chen will represent the freshman class on University Council. The UA recently held a successful Open Forum where students were given the opportunity to raise issues of importance to them.

Brett Thalmann

Vice-Chair External Affairs, Undergraduate Assembly

GAPSA Status Report

- In late September, GAPSA hosted a reception to bring together Provost Daniels and many of Penn's student leaders. The Provost facilitated an open and candid discussion of issues facing campus leaders as well as opportunities to improve student experiences in their degree programs. The Office of the Provost, GAPSA, and the UA are already working to address topics raised in the reception, and many of the concerns voiced such as interdisciplinary opportunities and communication about activities and resources available to students are part of GAPSA's policy priorities this year.
- GAPSA is actively engaged in several projects related to interdisciplinary study and research. GAPSA is working with the Provost's office on increasing accessibility and awareness of interdisciplinary opportunities, creating an interdisciplinary symposium and on a proposal to support graduate and professional student-conceived ideas for interdisciplinary work and research. In addition, GAPSA presented to the Council of Graduate Deans a joint plan with the Provost's office to provide more comprehensive information to graduate and professional students on interdisciplinary degree and certificate programs and access to courses outside of their home school or department.
- GAPSA has prepared for November's Trustee meetings by appointing graduate student liaisons to these committees and participating in the orientation given by the Office of the Secretary. In addition, graduate student liaisons to Trustee committees are convening in their respective GAPSA Policy Groups to discuss relevant policy issues. GAPSA conducted its own series of orientations for members of its Policy Groups who serve as representatives on a wide range of university-wide committees, including Trustee committees. The six GAPSA Policy Groups are Academic Policy; Student Life; Health; Safety, Security, and Transportation; Campus Development and Facilities; and Social Responsibility.
- GAPSA has begun participating in the Task Force on Global Engagement and will be holding an open forum to generate student input on global engagement at its October 19 General Assembly (GA) meeting, which is open to all graduate and professional students.
- GAPSA also looks forward to welcoming Anita Mastroieni, Director of the Graduate Student Center, to its October 19 GA meeting. GAPSA and the Graduate Student Center have a productive history of working together toward progress for graduate and professional students, and the first half of the GA meeting appropriately will be devoted to a presentation on and discussion of the history of the Graduate Student Center, its relationship with GAPSA, and its goals and activities this academic year.

- In the context of GAPSAs ongoing efforts to establish a family-supportive environment for graduate and professional students (for those who are or are planning to be parents), leaders from GAPSAs met with Anita Mastroieni to refine and prioritize the roles and responsibilities of the part-time fellow devoted to providing information that will guide student life as a parent (incl. health insurance privileges, dependent care, and university privileges while on leave). The fellow will be holding a meet and greet session for students to get acquainted with him and to continue to communicate their needs and questions throughout the day on October 20 at his office in the Graduate Student Center.
- The joint GAPSAs-UA Campus Development Task Force has begun to convene. To support its work, a walk-through of recently acquired lands for Task Force members is currently being organized for early November by the EVPs office. Additionally, GAPSAs will be distributing a questionnaire focused on campus needs to its General Assembly school representatives at its October 19 meeting. Results of this survey will be directed to the Task Force and will help shape a subsequent survey to be given to all graduate and professional students. Additionally, GAPSAs looks forward to welcoming Michael Harris and other representatives from the offices of the EVP and Facilities to its upcoming November 2nd GA meeting for a presentation of background information on the ongoing Campus Development plans and an open forum on campus needs.
- GAPSAs sent three delegates to the Ivy Summit held at Yale over the weekend of October 14. The experience was highly worthwhile and positive; delegates were able to share best practices from Penn and from GAPSAs student leadership as well as bring back new lessons learned to be applied to our work at GAPSAs. A more detailed report of the Ivy Summit outcomes will be presented at GAPSAs October 19 meeting. We look forward to participating in next years summit at Dartmouth.
- GAPSAs social events and student programs continue to be greeted with high demand and positive feedback. Our World Café Live Lunch Event on September 28 hosted 75 graduate and professional students to subsidized access to this cultural venue and allowed them to get to know students from programs and schools outside of their own. Our Rock Climbing event at the Pottruck Center was highly successful, selling out to the maximum capacity number. With the Graduate Student Center, GAPSAs welcomed Chris Elliot who had the entire crowd laughing. Looking forward, this Thursday, October 20, GAPSAs holds its first on-campus happy hour of the school year at the Dental School in the Schattner Atrium and weather permitting in the spacious Fonseca Gardens. GAPSAs on-campus happy hours rotate locations and encourage graduate and professional students to discover new areas of Penns large campus while enjoying music, food and drink, and meeting other students.

Lela Jacobsohn
GAPSAs Chair