Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)

Annual Report
Presented by the 2023-2024 Executive Board
Overview and State of GAPSA

2023-2024 Executive Board
GAPSA and the University faced unprecedented challenges and persevered throughout the year.

- Implementation of new financial policies and procedures following an audit of student groups, creating challenges to GAPSA’s operations and student relations.
- Challenges to free speech on campus amid global conflicts that manifest here at Penn.
- Administrative distrust of GAPSA and relationships that needed to be rebuilt across the University.
- Changing legal landscape around affirmative action and the ability of students to be admitted and potentially connect based on identity.
- Spontaneous leadership changes due to donor backlash and campus unrest halfway through the year.
- Leadership that was largely new to GAPSA, creating an opportunity for fresh perspective.
Leadership Report

Michael Krone, President
Alexander Chmielinski, Executive Vice President
President’s Report

The President’s priority was to create an efficient, inclusive, and accountable GAPSA that prioritized student-facing initiatives and common-sense approaches to policy and operational challenges facing graduate students.

Building stronger relationships with Penn administrators

GAPSA’s Executive Board held more than 15 meetings with administrators this year, including with the President, Provost, Executive Vice President, Vice Provost for University Life, Career Services, Faculty Senate Leadership, ISSS, and more.

For many administrative centers, this was the first time that they had met with GAPSA in a group setting, and we prioritized targeting appropriate agenda topics with the offices that could address them (e.g., housing with the EVP).

Admin responded positively to meetings, signaled desire for increased partnership.

Improve GA awareness of GAPSA and engagement with GA meetings

Developed a cadence of GA communication pre- and post-GA meetings to improve knowledge and awareness of actions for the GA to take (e.g., sign up for committees, apply to University Council, read resolutions).

Improved presentations at meetings to boost GA understanding of GAPSA procedure and policies, including addition of “Focus Issue” discussions to hone in on issues facing graduate and professional students.
President’s Report (1/2)

The President’s priority was to create an efficient, inclusive, and accountable GAPSA that prioritized student-facing initiatives and common-sense approaches to policy and operational challenges facing graduate students.

Revitalize Presidents’ Advisory Council (PAC)

This year, we hosted all four Presidents’ Advisory Council meetings for the first time in recent memory, welcoming in Presidents, Treasurers, and leaders of G12+ organizations to discuss issues pertaining to school financing and policy changes, GAPSA Programs, and managing student groups.

PAC served as a forum for G12+ leaders to get to know each other and to know GAPSA and facilitated dialogue across schools.

Represent GAPSA on University and external Boards

GAPSA was represented on University Council, the Provost’s Academic Planning and Budget Committee, the University Task Force on Combatting Antisemitism, and the Consultative Committee for the Search for the Vice Provost for Libraries.

In each meeting, GAPSA leaders represented the needs of graduate students and advocated for greater inclusion of graduate student feedback.
The President’s priority was to create an efficient, inclusive, and accountable GAPSA that prioritized student-facing initiatives and common-sense approaches to policy and operational challenges facing graduate students.

### Constitutional amendments and improvements

Through the diligent work of the Drafting Committee, GAPSA’s Constitution and Standing Rules were updated to better reflect current policies and procedures and to ensure compliance with University policies.

Much work is still to be done to ensure proper governance, but the clerical and substantive changes made through Bills 7, 8, and 9 will provide GAPSA with a stronger documented foundation across all its Divisions and Councils.

### Developed a culture of feedback and sensitivity to change

Through efforts like the mid-year survey, agenda suggestion form, and interpersonal interactions, GAPSA sought this year to be more responsive to GA members’ needs, resulting in (1) shorter, more efficient GA meetings, (2) more training on procedure and Roberts’ Rules, (3) fewer President-led agenda topics at meetings, and (4) improved satisfaction at GAPSA events (e.g., happy hours).
The Executive Vice President sought to create a community within GAPSA and ensure that all GAPSA’s leaders and members had the tools to accomplish their goals throughout the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilization of President Gutmann Leadership Award (PGLA)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the fiscal year, approximately $40,000 in travel funds were awarded to students who demonstrated a need for financial assistance to attend international conferences. Students were actively presenting their work and made concerted efforts to minimize travel costs. Collaborative efforts with the Research and Professional Council ensured the maximization of funding distribution to support as many students as possible.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Team Retreat in Fall 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A cost-effective executive retreat was organized, which played a pivotal role in enhancing team cohesion and setting a positive tone for the year. The total expenditure for this retreat was kept under $2,500, demonstrating financial prudence while achieving the intended team-building outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Vice President’s Report (2/3)

The Executive Vice President sought to create a community within GAPSA and ensure that all GAPSA’s leaders and members had the tools to accomplish their goals throughout the year.

Maintenance of a Productive Work Environment

A focus was maintained on nurturing a cohesive and stable executive body, which contributed to zero resignations at the Vice President level throughout the year. This stability was crucial in ensuring the effectiveness and continuity of the executive team’s initiatives.

Legislative Advocacy and Collaboration

In collaboration with peer institutions and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), efforts were undertaken to identify the impact of legislative Bill H.R. 6585 on various schools. A strategy was developed to prevent students from institutions with large endowments, such as Curtis, Juilliard, and Mayo, from being unfairly restricted from accessing federal student loans. This initiative aimed to safeguard access to these prestigious programs for students facing financial barriers.
Executive Vice President’s Report (3/3)

The Executive Vice President sought to create a community within GAPSA and ensure that all GAPSA’s leaders and members had the tools to accomplish their goals throughout the year.

Financial Transparency and Discretionary Spending

Approximately $500 was allocated from discretionary funds to cover unforeseen expenses related to Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA) events (e.g., utensils, cookies) to ensure smooth execution of events.

Health and Wellness Initiatives

Discretionary funds were also utilized to provide essential oral healthcare products to students.

Efforts included the development of standardized treatment plans and organizational resources to guide students in accessing dental care through the university, regardless of their insurance coverage.

Engagement and Representation

Commitment to university governance was demonstrated by attending all University Council meetings and as many administrative meetings as possible, ensuring that the voices of the executive body and the student population were well-represented and heard.
Councils

Chloe Ricks-Martinez, IDEAL Council Chair
Kendall Hart, Professional Council Chair
Ludwig Zhao, Research Council Chair
Professional Council accomplished goals of student funding and member development

### Funding Provided External To Students

Awarded over $136,000 in Professional Student Individual Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summer 2023</th>
<th>Fall 2023</th>
<th>Spring 2024</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$21K</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$18K</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$97K</td>
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### Internal Council Development Initiatives

- Hosted a legislative writing workshop
- Discussed legislation in council
- Brought Professional Council members together on legislation
- Discussed key issues relating to Professional students

The big concept of Professional Council this year was that Professional Council benefited our students by providing an extraordinary amount of grants and by uniting around key issues.
Research Council supported students through grant programs and advocacy initiatives (1/3)

Funding Provided Through Individual and Group Grants

Awarded $136,079 in Research Student Individual Grants to 197 students, with highest proportion of awardees in SAS (57%), SEAS (17%), GSE (12%), and PSOM (7%)

Funded 7 events through the Academic Event Fund, using $32K

Redesigning the GAPSA-Provost Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Innovation

Expanding the Fellowship's scope to include support for applicants attending workshops and training programs beyond research projects

Realigning the Fellowship's goals and purpose with the current leadership vision at Penn

Simplifying the application process for applicants, recommenders, and reviewers
Research Council supported students through grant programs and advocacy initiatives (2/3)

Council Town Hall and Doctoral Student Climate Survey

Directly gathered feedback and suggestions from over 250 constituents and identified common issues like:

- Transportation concerns, including Penn Transit and Public Transit.
- Availability of grants and fellowships for conference travel.
- Support for mentorship and research guidance from faculty advisors.
- Enhancing community-building and fostering connections among research students.
Research Council supported students through grant programs and advocacy initiatives (3/3)

Resolution on Research Student Information Sharing

Successfully advocating for and implementing, starting Academic Year 2025, a university-wide comprehensive and standardized offer letter system for all admitted Ph.D. students, along with a commitment letter for all enrolled Ph.D. students

Providing standards and guidelines for all Graduate Group handbooks and websites and collaborating with VPE over the summer for implementation

Establishing a standing committee to collaborate with all G9 Schools leadership and the VPE to ensure regular reviews of handbook and website requirements

Collaborating with the VPE and GSC to organize a university-wide Ph.D. gathering at the start of the next academic year, aiming to provide university resources and foster connections among Ph.D. students
IDEAL Council created new funding opportunities for group partnerships and gathered feedback

Allocated 10% of IDEAL’s Empowerment Fund budget to pilot Affinity Partnership Fund (APF) and secured GAPSA match next year.

Increased percentage of IDEAL Council budget allocated for Empowerment Fund, allowing groups to receive up to 150% of prior year’s award.

Worked with Equity & Access team to jointly plan “Seats at the Table” series.

Created infrastructure for greater inclusion of school-based affinity groups in GAPSA as IDEAL affiliates.

Partnered with Equity & Access to raise awareness about first generation graduate student needs.

Facilitated discussion between VPUL and IDEAL affinity leaders about graduate use of ARCH.
Advocacy Division

Saloni Tandon, Vice President for Advocacy
Mayowa Fageyinbo, Director of Equity and Access
Gaurav Mangal, Director of International Student Affairs
Xinyi Wang, Director of External Relations
Kerone Wint, Director of Wellness
GAPSA Advocacy has been the voice of student concerns to the highest levels of the university

Throughout the year, GAPSA Advocacy has...

- Identified key challenges faced by students across their journey at Penn, and took actions to raise them to the administration through meetings, and the University Council (UC)

Despite facing challenges such as...

- Limited response from administrators on key tasks and institutional slowness
- Perceived inadequacy or limited sensitivity of Penn-level committees in general
- Inability to make purchases and reliance on GAPSA bureaucracy
- Need for greater orientation to how GAPSA and the university work

To yield results for graduate and professional students...

- Wellness Week
- Clothes donation drive
- World Café
- Pop-up Pantries
- Discussion sessions
- International Cultural Fair
- Discussion sessions during the GA
- Participation in Ivy+
- Supporting ISSS’s Forerunner
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (1/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited affordability for transit options</td>
<td>Students live across regions and are often forced to travel for internships that are unpaid. The lack of regional partnerships with SEPTA leads to financial burdens</td>
<td>Penn level partnership with SEPTA for subsidized passes</td>
<td>Requested the relevant office multiple times but have not seen any progress. SEPTA partners are eager to move forward Issue was also raised in the last UC for 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of reliable emergency housing</td>
<td>The university has no graduate-student-specific housing facility, causing challenges for students that face sudden housing crisis</td>
<td>Penn could identify college houses and allocate space for graduate students; or any other solution</td>
<td>Issue raised at the UC Admin have responded that they feel they have enough mechanisms to take care of students in such situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (2/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable shuttle operations, and delayed timings</td>
<td>Shuttle timings now operate starting at 7:30pm, making it challenging for students during winters</td>
<td>Roll back timings, and improve algorithm of the shuttle</td>
<td>Raised issue across meetings, and during UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students also face significant delays in the shuttle operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Admin have raised concerns over the misuse of the shuttle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>This needs more long-term intervention from the side of GAPSA to the students so that they are more aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food insecurity</td>
<td>Some students believe that students are food insecure and need additional support</td>
<td>More focused, long-term interventions that ensure students facing challenges are aware of, and can access solutions like Student Intervention Services</td>
<td>Food pantries rolled out to offer short-term support</td>
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<td>Targeting and tracking if students in genuine need are using it is a concern</td>
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GAPSA 2023-2024 Annual Report
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (3/8)

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of perceived safety</td>
<td>Students across cultural, religious identities expressed feeling unsafe</td>
<td>Ensuring that DPS was aware of the challenges that students were facing, and was able to always deploy adequate support to students</td>
<td>Challenges conveyed to DPS; key gap perceived was the lack of standardized information to all graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of equity in employment / internship opportunities</td>
<td>CPT is inconsistent across schools, and across departments within schools even in instances where programs are very similar. This has led to inequitable opportunities for international students, further impacting their employability after graduation</td>
<td>Ensure that all faculty members are sensitized to the larger CPT process, and the implications that it has on students. Ensure that each program is re-evaluated by the departments so that they offer maximum CPT opportunity within the legal framework. Ensure high sensitization of all staff members on CPT.</td>
<td>Issue has been raised to the provost, president multiple times. Issue also extensively discussed with ISSS, and Career Services with pilot program tests to be run in SP2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GAPSA 2023-2024 Annual Report
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (4/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistent information offered to students during orientation</td>
<td>Students across schools receive varying levels of information on support systems offered at Penn, impacting their experiences while being a student, and in some cases leading to negative consequences in the event of the student requiring additional accommodations</td>
<td>Ensure all schools at the minimum distribute the resources developed by the Grad Center to all its students – could be in the form of mandatory courses on canvas. Ensure administrators across schools are aware of all support services offered at Penn</td>
<td>The problem is accepted and acknowledged however the current decentralization of schools make it extremely difficult to ensure consistency on this front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of emergency funding to international students affected by crisis</td>
<td>At the time of any crisis (economic, political or otherwise), international students are likely to be impacted financially. There is no current funding pool for such emergencies at the graduate level.</td>
<td>Develop a pool of funding for graduate students facing international emergencies.</td>
<td>Raised at UC Admin have voiced that they are finding donors to develop this pool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (5/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of adequate care facilities for students that have care-giving responsibilities</td>
<td>Almost 10% of grad students have care giving responsibilities, but have limited support structures for the same on campus, gatekeeping education for them</td>
<td>Expand day-care facilities for grad students</td>
<td>Raised at UC, raised with Faculty Senate and other major administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate green norms, rules, efforts to help ensure that tech waste is reduced</td>
<td>High waste of food, clothes, plastic on campus contributing to environmental harms</td>
<td>Build systemic changes to this to help reduce waste</td>
<td>Hosted a clothing drive during wellness week to ensure clothes are diverted to homeless in Philly with similar efforts pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived discomfort with the insurance offerings at Penn</td>
<td>Penn’s insurance plan was found to have several limitations, and was found to be expensive</td>
<td>Change or improve the plan</td>
<td>GAPSA representatives are a part of Student Health Insurance Advisory Committee to help re-evaluate a new plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (6/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall lack of centralization of efforts across key aspects that affect all grad students</td>
<td>Each school has their own authority, autonomy, and hence offer varying levels of support, have differing systems for students; causing more inequities</td>
<td>Have some level of consistency in offering, or increased accountability of schools to the Provost</td>
<td>Raised multiple times across forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived limited sense of belonging by students belonging to different cultural identities</td>
<td>Students from minority groups have often raised the feeling that they do not belong at Penn</td>
<td>There are several efforts being deployed both by the admin, and by students across groups</td>
<td>Equity and Access partnered with IDEAL to help ensure ‘a seat at the table’ conversations were undertaken, to help students share their perception and experiences on critical issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cohesion across schools in the Philadelphia region</td>
<td>Several other schools in Philadelphia face similar challenges especially when it comes to safety, transit and other aspects</td>
<td>Host a Philly+ program like that of Ivy+</td>
<td>Suggested carry-forward exercise for 2024-2025</td>
</tr>
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</table>
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (7/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
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<th>Solution</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of ultrasound facilities at Penn’s Student Health Services</td>
<td>SHS did not offer ultrasound facilities, impacting emergent diagnostic services needed by students especially since wait times in the ER are very high</td>
<td>Purchase an ultrasound machine</td>
<td>Machine is likely to be ready for go-live by Fall 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistent efforts to advocate for, and representation of international students</td>
<td>The extent to which international students have a voice depends on the level of association, positionality of representatives</td>
<td>Have a dedicated Graduate International Student Assembly (GAISO) to reduce dependency on GAPSA for advocacy needs</td>
<td>The larger concept and procedure for GAISO needs to be fleshed out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for cultural sensitization in Student Wellness</td>
<td>Students requiring long term care are often diverted to doctors outside Penn that are not vetted, or are culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Develop a list of culturally relevant, vetted therapists and only then divert students to them</td>
<td>Wellness at Penn team is aware of the problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GAPSA Advocacy has identified and voiced concern for many student issues throughout the year (8/8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-facing issue</th>
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<th>Solution</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</table>
| Penalty on late fees, and early deadline on the Penn Pay Plan | Fine imposed on students if they are delayed in their fee payment  
Additionally, deadline to enroll in the Penn Pay Plan is very early, and there is no failsafe or support systems offered for exceptional issues. | Extend the deadline and consider genuine cases for late fee payments | Issue raised at UC   |
Finance Division

Nakisha Renee Jones, Vice President for Finance
Debbie Allen, Director of Funds Management
Rene Alvarado, Director of Budget
EriOluwa Oni, Director of Financial Reporting
Shuruthi Senthil Murugan, Deputy Director of IPF
## Division of Finance overview

### Division at-a-glance

The Finance Division manages grant application, evaluation, and disbursement processes; perform regular audits of GAPSA Finances, GAPSA-funded groups, events, and initiatives. Maintain financial records & provide regular reports; and designs and maintains GAPSA budget & GAPSA-funded events/initiatives.

### Progress year to date

- Modernized individual grant applications into universal application for PGLA and Council-based grants
- Added Development budgets to Councils and created Affinity Partnership Fund
- Hosted FAB meetings and trained G12+ leaders on how to engage with GAPSA Finance
- Developed FY24 and FY25 budgets in consultation with the GA and GAPSA leaders
- Evaluated student group event fund proposals and made awarding decisions
- Established greater accountability of GAPSA Finance and robust transparency
GAPSA Finance highlights of the year

**Highlights include:**

- The year of three budgets, budget survey, multi-factor budget point system
- Increasing the Empowerment Fund in Fall of 2023 with IDEAL Chair
- Creation of the Affinity Partnership Fund
- Opening of the GFAC registration process
- Reduction of paperwork for Lending Vehicle, Green Leaf, and Pilot Fund approvals
- Merging to the Graduate Student Center’s grant system for individual grants
- Finance Committee member participation and support for group funding evaluations
- Creation of internal database of student group data for past two fiscal years
How did GAPSA Finance arrive at these numbers?

All student groups were asked to register for GAPSA Finance Association Council (GFAC), which is the treasurers of GAPSA and its constituent student organizations, including G12+ and student groups funded by GAPSA. Every application was reviewed for compliance with GAPSA policies to receive funding for the fiscal year. Denied applications went to GAPSA Finance Committee for review.

GAPSA Finance received 96 GFAC applications and approved 90% between Oct. 2023 and Apr. 2024

87 Two-thirds of applicants were non-Ph.D. students, one-third were Ph.D. students
65% of groups had received funding before, and 35% of groups were new

$561K Total size of all student groups' budgets for the year, reflecting demand for GAPSA funding

$290K Total GAPSA budget for student groups FY24 (excluding G12 and IPF)
GAPSA Finance approved more than 60 groups’ applications for nearly $300K in funding

**Total Groups Approved**
GAPSA Finance received 68 universal fund applications and approved 96% between Oct. 2023 and Apr. 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funded</th>
<th>Not Funded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

**Total Funds Approved**
GAPSA Finance received $327K in funding requests and approved $298K across various funding sources (details to follow)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funded</th>
<th>Not Funded</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$298K</td>
<td>$29K</td>
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</table>
## Summary of fund awards by account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Award Letters</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stud. Group Event Fund</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$97.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad. Event Fund</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$27.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergy Fund</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$25.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Fund</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$18.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Leaf</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$4.0K</td>
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<tr>
<td>COF</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$13.5K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discretionary Fund</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$34.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment Fund</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$80.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interschool Part. Fund</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$115.0K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity Part. Fund</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$8.0K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Award letters**

- **117 Award letters**

**Total Funding**

- **$422K** Awarded in funding to student groups (including IDEAL groups)
- **$840K** In G12+ governments, plus $92K in GAPSA match for IPF
GAPSA Finance contended with policy changes while also striving for internal improvements

GAPSA Finance navigated changes in policy enacted by the University...

- Limitations on per-person expenditures for meetings and events
- Limitations on purchasing card capabilities for GAPSA and other student groups
- Changing reporting requirements
- An accelerated budget timeline
- Increased scrutiny from Provost’s Administrative Affairs

...and sought to repair and improve internal processes

- Implementing new grant applications for students and student groups
- Promoting internal spending controls and a culture of financial accountability
- Training at Executive Board retreat on how to use GAPSA budget dollars and report on use
- Hosting financial wellness training for students
GAPSA Finance oversaw the passage of FY24 and FY25 Budgets and revitalized access, transparency, and accountability to long-standing commitments.

### Developing Our Budget

Budget Committee prepared a refreshed FY24 Budget approved by the GA this Fall, which brought it into compliance with University policies and crafted new opportunities for innovation (e.g., Affinity Partnership Fund).

Budget Committee adapted to a new budget timeline that accelerated the development of the annual budget, and adhered to principles of GA and student input and accountability to long-standing commitments.

Budget Committee created an allocation mechanism based on utilization, need, and interest and ensured robust transparency among allocations.

Budget Committee created detailed informational materials about what was in the budget and the parameters for spending and coached Executive members on using funds.

The budgets, mid-year release, and monthly spending goals were all crafted to meet dynamic student needs.
GAPSA Finance oversaw the passage of FY24 and FY25 Budgets and revitalized access, transparency

Getting Funding Out to Students

GAPSA Funds debuted a new universal application for GAPSA individual grants in partnership with the Councils and EVP, leading to an easier access point for students to apply for GAPSA grants; established uniform covered periods and submission deadlines across Professional Council and PGLA to ensure equity and fairness in the funding application process.

GAPSA Funds streamlined the grant award process for students by confirming that students were able to choose between grants they were awarded and ensuring compliance with University policies regarding funding maximums.

GAPSA Funds streamlined support for student groups through the GAPSA Finance Associations Council (GFAC) application, which ensures groups are registered and current with After-Action Reports, and through a universal funding application, enhancing compliance with GAPSA and University policies.

Students can browse eligibility and funding policies for student groups...

...and for individual travel, conference, or professional development grants
Operations Division

Gabrielle Newell, Vice President for Operations
Aradhana Kasimsetty, Director of Logistics
Dora Racca, Director of Data Analytics
Ananth Srinivas, Director of Public Relations
Paul Welfer, Director of Alumni Relations
Operations Division kept GAPSA running smoothly and connected us to the University

Supported nineteen different local vendors across various internal GAPSA meetings and met diverse dietary needs

Created a safer structure for supporting small and medium sized off campus internal socials with alcohol

Supported General Assembly member comprehension of meeting materials through multiple avenues (e.g., emails, handouts, and meeting slides post meeting)

Implemented monthly alumni happy hours that provided valuable networking opportunities for alumni to connect with each other and with current students. Ultimately leading to higher rates of volunteerism and mentorship

Strengthened alumni engagement through regular communication, alumni panels, and relationship-building amongst alumni and students
Operations Division kept GAPSA running smoothly and connected us to the University

Spearheaded the conception and deployment of a brand-new website, meticulously crafted for optimal efficiency, streamlining user navigation and enhancing accessibility to a diverse array of GAPSA resources and engagement opportunities.

Supported student initiatives by purchasing swag from a campus student run organization, fostering collaboration and empowering student entrepreneurship, while also providing branded merchandise for all GA members.
Data Analytics tracked the engagement with GAPSA from various constituencies
OPERATIONS REPORTS

Sweeten Alumni Dinner 9/22/23
Friendly Fridays Networking 11/10/23
Career Pathways Alumni Panels 2/19/24
Penn Homecoming 11/4/23
International Alumni Brunch 11/10/23
GAPSA Goes Back 7/15/23
Second Thursdays Mixers 10/13/23
GAPSA Alumni Ticket Program 10/25/23
GAPSA Alumni Mentoring 12/14/23
GAPSA Alumni Networking 12/14/23
GAPSA Alumni Fundraising 1/25/24
GAPSA Alumni Advisory Board 3/28/24
Alumni Relations is connecting students at home and abroad through Summer 2024

Career Pathways Alumni Panel
Second Thursday Alumni Mixer
Alumni Weekend
GSC Graduate Awards & Alumni Receptions
ISSSS International Alumni Welcome Back Brunch
GAPSA Goes Global: Sao Paolo Forerunner
Second Thursday Alumni Mixer
GAPSA Goes Global: Singapore Forerunner
GAPSA Goes Global: Mumbai Forerunner
GAPSA Goes Global: Shanghai Forerunner

291,356
Graduate Alumni

14,750
Mentors

104,219
Global Alumni
Programming Division

Anusha Singhal, Vice President for Programming
Sofia Castelli, Director of Academic Programming
Sparsh Maheshwari, Director of Cultural Programming
Sruti Sailam, Director of Social Programming
Programming put together dozens of events throughout the year to build community

Programming’s goal was to build a robust programming calendar with fun social, cultural, & academic events

- Have programs that aim to embrace inclusivity and multiculturalism and to promote or build cultural awareness
- Bring together other student groups and collaborate with them
- Increase the reach of our events, including more artistic events as an outlet from work or school
- Incorporate fitness classes as a method of meeting other graduate students with similar interests
- Guide grad students through pivotal career choices and promoting insightful educational experiences
- Cultivate an enriching academic environment that fosters intellectual growth and professional development opportunities
Flagship events (1/2)

~1,200 grad students attended 20 GradFest events over a week

Collaborated with 30 student groups & on-campus partners for GradFair

Wellness Week helped students to get de-stressed before finals and focused on social, mental, and financial wellness
Flagship events (2/2)

More than 2,200 students across all 12 schools attended the Spring Gala at The Franklin Institute in February 2024.

Sports Carnival in May 2024 will be the last big event of the year with food, games, and a movie.
Cultural Programming highlights

This year we explored Philly and celebrated many cultures…

- Broadway Series: Madame Butterfly, Wicked
- Friendsgiving Dinner
- Bowling Bash at Lucky Strike
- Philadelphia Flower Show
- PCMS Concert Pass
- Halloween Nights at ESP
- Phillies vs Reds Game
- Improv Comedy Show
- Collaborations with IDEAL groups and on-campus partners like GSC, FRC, CRCs
- Intercultural Festival with AIS, ISSS, and Penn Global
- Longwood Gardens Trip (upcoming May 4)
Social Programming highlights

This year we tried to build an inclusive calendar with a balance of free and paid events…

We had small-scale socials, collaborated with different organizations on campus and a variety of small businesses around Philadelphia.

Fitness Series: Zumba, circuit training, mat Pilates, spin classes

InBody scanning

Barry’s workout class

Ice cream social

Jezabel’s Alfajores class

Tote bag decorating class
Academic Programming

Our focus was to help students explore career paths to feel confident about life after Penn...

Career Pathways Panels & Mixers
- STEM-focus
- Humanities & Social Sciences
- Working in International Organizations
- Graduation photos

We also toured many museums together...

Ancient Alcohol Tour & Tasting
Philadelphia Museum of Art Tour
Rodin Museum Tour
Mütter Museum Tour
Franklin Institute Tour