

**2007-08 Annual Report****Executive Board**

Tuba Pinar Yildirim, President  
Lauren Becker, Vice President of Committees  
Nancy Potter, Vice President of Communications  
Mary Gibson, Vice President of Finance

**Assembly Board***Arts & Sciences*

Zeynep Isvan  
Kristen Flanagan  
Marguerite Matthews

*Biomedical*

Chad Kimmel

*GSPLA*

Ali Ashraf

*Public Health*

Alison Pilsner

*Katz School of Business*

Clayton Youngs  
Gina McDonell

*Dental Medicine*

Walter Ackah

*Engineering*

Ian Bellayr

*Health & Rehabilitation Sciences*

Lauren Murphy

*Education*

Byron Kohut  
Chantee McBride  
Jessica Stocks

*Information Sciences*

Christopher Lemery

*Law*

Kelly Lane

*Medicine*

Cary Boyd

*Nursing*

Jennifer Stewart

*Pharmacy - PharmD*

Mike Smith

*Pharmacy - PhD*

Mark Donnelly

*Social Work*

Dominique Chatman

*Turkish American Student Association (TASA)*

Zeynep Gozde Icten

*Graduate Organization for the Study of Europe and Central Asia (GOSECA)*

James Johnson

*Chinese Students & Scholars Association (CSSA)*

Bowen Liu

*ANKUR: Indian Graduate Student Association*

Sajith Pillai

*Pan African Graduate and Professional Student Association (PANAF)*

Selasi Blavo

Prepared by Lindsay Weissberg, Administrative Assistant

## About GPSA

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly is the umbrella governmental organization of the graduate and professional student body at the University of Pittsburgh. It oversees the fourteen (14) graduate student governments (GSGs) (one for each school) who are responsible for the graduate student organizations (GSOs) under them, and advocates on behalf of over nine thousand graduate and professional students at the University.

The mission of GPSA is to:

- Establish and maintain networks of communication between the GPSA Assembly and GSGs, among GSGs, between GPSA and the University committees, and between GPSA and individual graduate students.
- Provide graduate student representation on University committees.
- Serve as a resource for individual graduate and professional students, Graduate Student Organizations and groups, and GSGs.
- Act as an advocate for graduate and professional student's concerns.
- Administer the student activity fee.

The GPSA Assembly, or Assembly Board (AB), is the governing body of the organization. It is comprised of at least one representative from each graduate and professional school. The Executive Board executes the resolutions of the AB, and through the guidance of the AB, sets the vision and agenda of the organization.

## Accomplishments

### *Organizational Name Change*

On January 14, 2008, GPSA changed its name from the Graduate and Professional Student Association to the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly. Becoming the "Assembly" more accurately reflects GPSA's role at Pitt as graduate student leaders representing their constituencies.

### *New Website*

With the help of Charles Kannair, a graduate student at the Katz School of Business, GPSA developed a new website. The new site is more user-friendly and has increased functionality. The site will be made live in the summer of 2008 and available at [www.gpsa.pitt.edu](http://www.gpsa.pitt.edu).

### *Mentorship Program*

GPSA established the Mentorship Program with its undergraduate counterpart, the Student Governing Board. The program was designed to help undergraduate students navigate their future plans for graduate study. To this end, the program attempted to pair each interested undergraduate with a graduate student who serves as a peer mentor.

### *Referendum*

In response to growing concern that GPSA could more effectively serve students with a larger budget, the Assembly Board decided to let students choose in a referendum whether to raise the student activity fee. The referendum asked students if the fee should be raised from \$20 per student, per semester to \$30 per student, per semester. Out of the 301 students who voted, 232 elected to maintain the current student activity of \$20 per semester.

## Programs

### *Orientations*

GPSA attended orientations at every graduate school in August 2007. It served as a powerful tool by advertising GPSA and its services to new graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh. A GPSA officer attended each orientation, and at many, the officer had an opportunity to speak before all the new graduate students in attendance. At each event, students received a brochure providing greater detail about GPSA and its services.

### *Social and Networking Events*

GPSA offered 16 social and networking events to graduate students in the fiscal year. GPSA gave away free tickets to: Pirates games, Sandcastle, Just Ducky! Tours of Pittsburgh, Kennywood's Fright Night, Rockclimbing, Pride & Prejudice, Nutcracker, Live Music at the Andy Warhol Museum, Sarah Chang Performing Four Seasons by Vivaldi, Vagina Monologues, Lost in the Stars, Hairspray, King Lear and Alice in Wonderland.

Many graduate students expressed an interest in attending GPSA events - nearly 600 students submitted ticket registration materials during the fiscal year.

## Finance

### *Budget*

GPSA receives all of its revenue through the \$20 per student/per semester activity fee. Operating off of the University's fiscal year, July 1 to June 30, GPSA 2007-2008 divides its revenues into two parts: GPSA operating budget and the Graduate School Governments' (GSG) operating budgets. Both divisions received approximately \$162,000. Unfortunately, GPSA incurred debt from the previous fiscal year, so the GPSA budget was reduced from \$162,323 to \$153,702.

The GPSA operating budget was distributed in the following way:

Programming:		\$ 107,650
Travel Grants	\$70,500	
Supplemental Funds	\$10,000	
Social Events	\$24,500	
Legal Services	\$2,000	
Assembly Expenses	\$650	
Assembly Groups:		\$20,000
Office Expenses:		\$2,000
Payroll and Officer Stipends:		\$24,450
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$154,100</b>

## GPSA 2007-2008 Annual Report

Two of GPSA's largest programming expenditures are travel grants and supplemental funds.

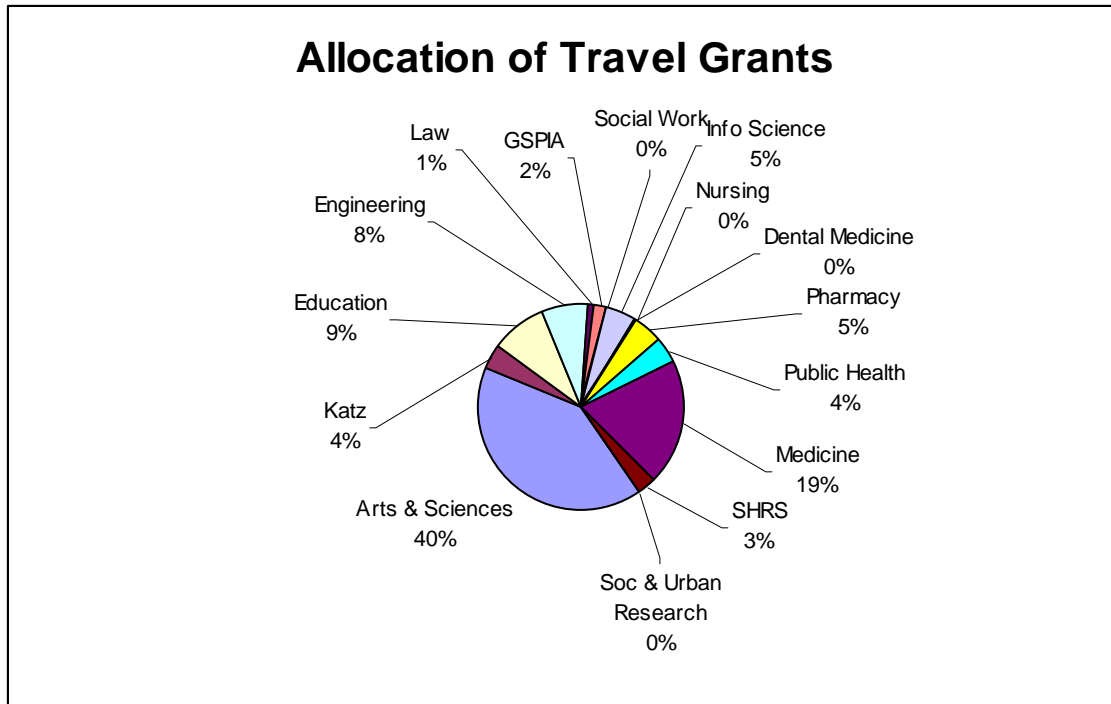
### *Travel Grants*

This year we allocated \$70,500 in travel grants to over 310 graduate or professional students. The amount of the awards ranged from \$100 to \$200 depending on conference location and degree of student participation.

In October 2007, GPSA made a fundamental shift in how travel grants are awarded. Instead of a first-come/first-serve allocation, we divided the year into two parts and allocated a limited number of funds for each period. Students needed to be pre-approved for funding prior to attending conferences, and once depleted, GPSA travel funds for that period were no longer available. While not every student received travel grant funding from GPSA, the Assembly Board felt that this was the most equitable way to distribute funds to students.

Additionally, GPSA reduced the funds awarded per student in order to assist more students. Originally varying between \$150 - \$300 per student, GPSA reduced the amount awarded per student to between \$100 - \$200.

The following graph illustrates the allocation of travel grants among the graduate schools:



## GPSA 2007-2008 Annual Report

### *Supplemental Funds*

In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, GPSA granted ten organizations a total of \$5,655 in supplemental funds out of \$10,000 budgeted. Before requesting funding from the Assembly Board, student group members met with the Executive Board. These meetings functioned to discuss the request, answer any questions, and provide guidance on alternative sources of funding.

Although any graduate student organization could apply for the funding, the intent behind supplemental funds is to help organizations launch a new event reaching graduate students across the Pitt campus.

The following groups received supplemental funds in this fiscal year:

Organization	Event	Granted	Disbursed
Engineering Grad School Government	Orientation for Engineering Students	\$1,600	\$1,500
Romanian Studies Group	Romanian Film Festival	\$500	\$488
SBA Veterans Society	Veterans Day Event	\$355	\$355
Muslim Law Students Association	The Concepts of Due Process & Torture in Islam	\$400	\$400
National Lawyers Guild	Debating the Issues: Detainee Treatment	\$500	\$500
Asian Pacific Am Med Student Assoc	Hepatitis B Screening	\$500	\$500
Chinese Students & Scholars Assoc	Promoting Beijing 2008 Olympic Games	\$500	\$500
Medical School Class of 2011	Event to raise funds for Gilda's Club	\$500	\$500
Creative Nonfiction Writers Society	Panel on job opportunities for nonfiction writers	\$300	\$225
Student Bar Association	BBQ for students; raise funds for class gift	\$500	\$500
Persian Panthers	Picnic Party for Iranian New Year Celebration	\$500	\$500

## GPSA 2007-2008 Annual Report

### Committees

We appreciate the administration's invitation for GPSA to sit on thirty-five different committees and boards. Below is a list of those committees with GPSA representation. We anticipate that many of these positions will become available towards the end of this semester as some of the representatives will complete their master or doctoral programs, or relocate from the Pittsburgh area.

#### Provost's Advisory Committees

Conflict of Interest Committee  
Information and Technology Steering  
Planning and Budget  
Women's Concerns

Kara Simpkins  
Kalpesh Upadhye  
Darius Ravangard  
Julie Hoggarth  
Zeynep Isvan  
Stephanie Sabol  
Yvonne Mburu

#### University Council on Graduate Studies

#### University Senate Standing Committees

Admissions and Student Aid  
Anti-discriminatory Policies  
Athletics  
Benefits and Welfare  
Budget Policies  
Bylaws and Procedures  
Commonwealth Relations  
Community Relations  
Computer Usage  
Educational Policies  
Library  
Plant Utilization and Planning  
Student Affairs  
Tenure and Academic Freedom  
University Press

Jared Roach  
Jayme Hart  
Chris Wermerson  
Chantelle Raub  
Mary Gibson  
Brad Kitlowski  
Oluwadamilola Oni  
Mary Gibson  
Kalpesh Upadhye  
< currently unfilled >  
Christine Mance  
Allyson Pottmeyer  
Ying Yang  
Ashley Taylor  
Christopher Lemery

#### Board of Trustees Committees

Academic Affairs/Libraries  
Affirmative Action  
Audit  
Budget  
Health Sciences  
Institutional Advancement  
Investment  
Student Affairs

Don Formoso  
Sanjay Nair  
Hari Krishna Jinaga  
Charles Fox  
Andrew Fisher  
Jaime Jansen  
Nishat Hassan  
Lauren Becker

#### Career Services Student Advisory Board

< currently unfilled >

#### Parking and Transportation Committee

Shelley Cockrell

#### Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award Selection Committee

Brandi Neal

#### University Review Board

Sagar Joshi  
Cathy Potter  
Daniel Rice  
John Croumer  
Elizabeth Cole  
Angela Green  
Elizabeth Holliday

## **Elections**

This year's election was conducted online on [my.pitt.edu](http://my.pitt.edu). Seven (7) candidates ran for four positions: president, vice president of committees, vice president of communications, and vice president of finance. Elections were held from March 24 to 28 and a meet-the-candidates session was on March 19<sup>th</sup>. GPSA publicized the election on the GPSA website and a mass e-mail announcement distributed through the AB representatives. Lindsay Weissberg chaired the Election Committee.

Approximately six hundred (600) graduate or professional students voted. Below are the election results.

### **President**

President-elect: Byron Kohut, School of Education  
Other candidate: Chad Kimmel, School of Medicine, Biomedical Informatics

### **VP of Committees**

VP of Committees-elect: Alex Braunstein, School of Arts & Sciences, English  
Other candidates: Chad Kimmel, School of Medicine, Biomedical Informatics Sophie Yan Phoenix, Graduate School of Public Health

### **VP of Communications**

VP of Communications-elect: Emily Stone, School of Arts & Sciences, English  
Other candidate: Lauren Cavallaro, School of Education

### **VP of Finance**

VP of Finance-elect: Kelong Han, School of Pharmacy