

2008-09 Annual Report**Executive Board**

Byron C. Kohut, President
Alex Braunstein, Vice President of Committees
Emily Stone, Vice President of Communications
Kelong Han, Vice President of Finance

Assembly Board*Arts & Sciences*

Zeynep Isvan
PJ Dillon
Marguerite Matthews

Biomedical

Kim Payne

G.SPLA

Brian Bauer

Public Health

Theresa Fanelli

Katz School of Business

Clayton Youngs
Phil Tedesco

Dental Medicine

Arvind Petrie

Engineering

Ian Bellayr

Health & Rehabilitation Sciences

Danielle Debias

Education

Ryan Mays
Chantee McBride
Jessica Stocks

Information Sciences

Michele Thomas

Law

Rachel Rosnick

Medicine

Clayton Lewis

Nursing

Jennifer Stewart

Pharmacy - PharmD

Steven Zona

Pharmacy - PhD

Mark Donnelly

Social Work

Amie Cande

ANKUR: Indian Graduate Student Association
Shivayogi Hiremath

Chinese Students & Scholars Association (CSSA)
Xiong Zhang

Grad Organization for the Study of Europe & Central Asia (GOSECA)
Samantha Hryciuk

Pan African Graduate & Prof Student Association (PANAF)
Nosakhire Griffin-El

Persian Panthers
Amir Soltani

Turkish American Student Association (TASA)
Mehmet Soytaş

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

New GPSA Website

With the help of Charles Kannair, a graduate student at the Katz School of Business, and personnel in the Computer Services and Systems Development (CSSD), GPSA developed a new website. The new site is more user-friendly and has increased functionality. The site was made live in late summer of 2008 and is now viewable at www.gpsa.pitt.edu.

Pittsburgh Graduate Student Consortium (PGSC)

This year GPSA helped create a consortium of graduate students in the Pittsburgh area that will serve as an organization that shares resources, knowledge, and networks that serves local graduate students. This year's activities culminated with The Spring Event held at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial April 23rd from 5-9pm featuring guest speaker Bill Flanagan of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. This event brought students from all three schools together to meet, network, create relationships, and meet business and corporate representatives from various Pittsburgh companies and foundations.

New Graduate Student Assembly Board Group

GPSA accepted a new graduate student assembly board group into the Assembly with full voting rights. The new assembly board group is the Persian Panthers. The duties of the new assembly board group involve abiding to the GPSA by-laws and attending monthly GPSA board meetings. In addition, GPSA has awarded the Persian Panthers a \$4500 operating budget for planning social events and maintaining an active role in the University community. With the addition of the Persian Panthers, GPSA now represents six assembly board groups and fourteen graduate school organizations.

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Chatham Eden Hall Farm Retreat

On Saturday October 25, 2008 executive graduate and professional student assembly board representatives from Chatham University, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Pittsburgh gathered for a one-day planning retreat at Chatham University's Eden Hall Farms. The purpose of the retreat was to discuss the possibility of holding a graduate student recognition day in the spring of 2009. The intent of inviting graduate student government representatives from the nearby universities and colleges would be to continue building what is slowly becoming a Pittsburgh graduate student consortium.

Pitt Lobby Day

GPSA would like to thank the University of Pittsburgh and the Governmental Relations staff for helping us to plan a trip to Harrisburg for participation in Pitt Lobby Day. For GPSA, this was a successful event and most likely will become an annual tradition. Graduate students actively met and lobbied Senators and Congressman in Harrisburg hoping to show Pennsylvania government officials the impact the University of Pittsburgh makes in the community.

University Senate Council Meetings

Because GPSA rarely reported on the activities of our various Graduate School Organizations, during the Senate Council Meetings this past year, GPSA highlighted the various activities performed over the months in the University community of at least one of our Graduate School Organizations or Assembly Board groups. Below are several examples of reports for our various student groups presented over the past year:

1. The Chinese Student and Scholars Association have been performing various fundraising activities and collecting donations for the recent earthquake relief effort that has disrupted life in parts of China. To date they have raised nearly \$5000 and have sent the donations via the Chinese Consulate General in New York to the Red Cross of China. The CSSA has called for donations from the whole Chinese community through email and their website (www.pittcssa.net). The GPSA would like to thank CSSA for going above and beyond to help aid in the relief of those affected by the earthquake. CSSA's outreach demonstrates the commitment University of Pittsburgh graduate students have for global awareness.
2. The History of Art and Architecture Graduate Student Organization (HAA GSO) within the School of Arts and Sciences sponsored a graduate symposium titled, *History of Art and Architecture Symposium - Storytelling: Playful Interactions and Spaces of Imagination in Contemporary Visual Culture*. This event was presented in conjunction with *Life on Mars*, the 55th Carnegie International, at the Carnegie Museum of Art. The graduate student symposium was designed to engage artists and students of contemporary art and film studies about the use of half-fictional, half-real narratives to raise awareness of political, social, and cultural realities.
3. Turkish American Student Association (TASA) students held an event to honor their native Turkey by holding a fundraiser in the Kurtzman Room of the William Pitt Union to raise funds for the establishment of a Turkish Nationality Room. The event was titled, *Turkish Nationality Room Kick Off Party*. The Nationality Rooms program of the University of Pittsburgh consists of 26 different nationality rooms situated in the Cathedral of Learning. Each year over 100,000 guests visit these museum quality

rooms representing cultures as distinct as the Armenian culture to the Japanese culture. Currently, there is no Turkish room in this collection. TASA is close to reaching their fundraising goal. They have successfully raised 90% of the needed funds.

4. The BioEngineering Graduate Student Counsel hosted a three-part guest speaker series presented around a breakfast meet and greet that they titled, *Breakfast with Industry*. For this series, local engineering executives met with engineering and business graduate students to discuss issues ranging from case studies of device to industrial job searches with biotech companies. This event was developed to inform students of the current state of affairs for startup companies in Pittsburgh and inform students of possible jobs available upon graduation.

Programs

Orientations

Beginning in July of this year, GPSA began visiting as many graduate school orientations as possible throughout the University to illustrate for our newly accepted graduate students the benefits and opportunities GPSA provides. It served as a powerful tool by advertising GPSA and its services to new graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh. Executive Board members created welcome gift bags containing various items to distribute at the orientations and spoke for about five to ten minutes about the many services GPSA performs throughout the year. Additionally, executive board members used this time to inform the students about the services their individual graduate school organizations provide in addition to GPSA. Lastly, executive board members reminded all graduate students that their continued involvement in GPSA is what makes GPSA active and strong.

Social and Networking Events

GPSA offered 13 social and networking events to graduate students in the fiscal year. GPSA sold or gave away free tickets to: Mattress Factory, Heinz History Center, Southside Works Cinema, Pittsburgh Pirates, Tailgate Prior to a Pitt Panthers Football Game, The Museum of Desire, Wine Tasting at Palate Partners, Michel Camilo Concert and Dinner, Nutcracker, Grad Student Happy Hour, Carmina Burana, La Boheme, and a End of Year Event at Soldiers and Sailors.

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 2008-2009 divides its revenues into two parts: GPSA operating budget and the Graduate School Governments' (GSG) operating budgets. Both divisions received approximately \$171,000. The goal this year was to end the year with a carry forward of funds. This was accomplished by creating a budget early in the fiscal year that reflected the wants and needs of the GPSA.

GPSA switched from a lottery style ticket system to offering tickets for sale where students make a nominal contribution of \$5 or \$10, which we reapply to the budget for social and cultural programming. All of the events, except for one, which GPSA sold a limited number

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of tickets sold out, suggesting that GPSA was meeting the needs and interests of graduate students.

The GPSA operating budget was distributed in the following way:

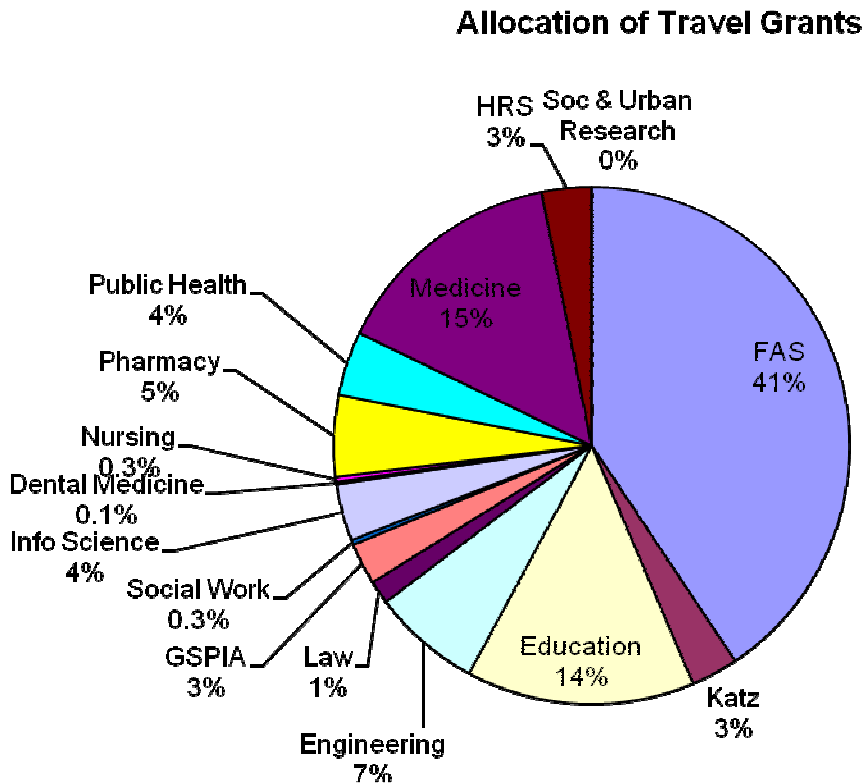
Programming:		\$ 107,650
Travel Grants	\$67,500	
Supplemental Funds	\$10,000	
Social Events	\$36,000	
Legal Services	\$2,000	
Assembly Expenses	\$1,000	
Assembly Groups:		\$23,000
Office Expenses:		\$3,500
Payroll and Officer Stipends:		\$25,950
TOTAL		\$171,000

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

Travel Grants

This year we allocated \$67,500 in travel grants to over 300 graduate or professional students. The amount of the awards ranged from \$100 to \$200 depending on conference location and degree of student participation.

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



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Supplemental Funds

In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, GPSA granted nine organizations a total of \$4500 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
Department of the History of Art & Architecture	Symposium	\$500	\$462
Romanian Studies Group	Romanian National Day	\$500	\$489
Student Bar Association	Laughter is the Best Medicine: Movie Night	\$500	\$500
Chinese Students & Scholars Assoc	Spring Festival 2009	\$500	\$500
Bioengineering Grad Student Council	Breakfast with Industry	\$500	\$395
NABU: GSPIA PhD Student Org	1 st Annual Graduate Student Conference	\$500	
National Lawyers Guild	Will Potter of GreenIsTheNewRed.Com	\$500	
iSHRIC: Int'l Students for Healthcare Reform	Fundraiser for Catholic Charities Refugees	\$500	
Russian Kino Club	Russian Film Festival	\$500	

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Committees

We appreciate the University 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.

Senate Committees:

1. Admissions & Student Aid	Zhe Su
2. Anti-Discriminatory Policies	Melanie Rodrigues
3. Athletics	Chris Wermerson
4. Benefits and Welfare	Seat Empty
5. Budget Policies	Mary Gibson
6. Bylaws & Procedures	Muthaiah Vairavan
7. Commonwealth Relations	Mary Gibson
8. Community Relations	Lauren Silva
9. Computer Usage	Kalpesh Upadhye
10. Educational Policies	Ali Ashraf
11. Library	Patrick Fennel
12. Plant Utilization & Planning	Nelson Totah
13. Student Affairs	Matthew Stull
14. Tenure & Academic Freedom	Brandi Neal
15. University Press	Micelle Kirly

Provost's Advisory Committees

Conflict of Interest Committee	Nelson Totah
Information and Technology Steering	Kalpesh Upadhye
Planning and Budget	Byron Kohut
Women's Concerns	Julie Hoggarth
	Zeynep Isvan
University Council on Graduate Studies	Byron Kohut
	Margarite Matthews

University Senate Standing Committees

Admissions and Student Aid	Zhe Su
Anti-discriminatory Policies	Melanie Rodrigues
Athletics	Chris Wermerson
Benefits and Welfare	Chantelle Raub
Budget Policies	Mary Gibson
Bylaws and Procedures	Muthaiah Vairavan
Commonwealth Relations	Mary Gibson
Community Relations	Lauren Silva
Computer Usage	Kalpesh Upadhye
Educational Policies	Ali Ashraf
Library	Patrick Fennel
Plant Utilization and Planning	Nelson Totah
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Board of Trustees Committees

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

Don Formoso
Christie Lawson
Seat Empty
Ron Gerstenberger
Seat Empty
Jessica Radzio
Zhe Su
Byron Kohut

Elections

This year's election was conducted online on my.pitt.edu. Seventeen (17) candidates ran for four positions: president, vice president of committees, vice president of communications, and vice president of finance. Elections were held from March 23 to 27 and a meet-the-candidates session was on March 18th. 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 (660) graduate or professional students voted. Below are the election results.

President

President-elect: Daniel Jimenez, A&S Neuroscience
Other candidate: Ian Bellayr, School of Medicine, Biomedical Informatics

VP of Committees

VP of Committees-elect: Marguerite Matthews, A&S Neuroscience
Other candidates: Dimitri Facaros, Law
William Fisher, Law
Shashi Sriram, Pharmacy
Galina Zapryanova, A&S Political Science

VP of Communications

VP of Communications-elect: PJ Dillon, A&S Computer Science
Other candidate: Katherine Buchman, Public Health
Tara Capece, Public Health
Eamon Chory, Public Health
Jason Godlove, Engineering
Lauren Hassen, Public Health
Dazun Xing, Engineering

VP of Finance

VP of Finance-elect: Chan Braithwaite, Law & Business
Matthew Miller, Engineering
Rachelle Stopczynski, Medicine