

## **Graduate Student Center 2006-07 Director's Report**

*The Graduate Student Center was established in 2001 to meet the unique needs of graduate and professional students at Penn. The Center:*

- Empowers graduate and professional students to create and participate in a graduate community at Penn.
- Creates intellectual, social, and professional development programs to bring together the wide range of graduate and professional students at Penn for cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural exchanges.
- Provides services to support graduate and professional students at Penn and in Philadelphia.
- Provides graduate and professional students with a centrally-located home that includes a lounge, computer lab, and meeting and event space.

### **Graduate Student Center**

University of Pennsylvania  
3615 Locust Walk  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6221  
(215) 746-6868  
[gsc@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:gsc@pobox.upenn.edu)  
<http://www.gsc.upenn.edu>

**The University of Pennsylvania's  
Graduate Student Center  
2006-07 Director's Report**

***Table of Contents***

---

Letter from the Director.....	1
Grad Center Stats.....	2
Highlights.....	3
Services & Resources.....	5
Programs.....	7
2006 New Graduate & Professional Student Orientation and Recruitment Activities.....	13
Web Site.....	15
Facilities.....	16
Partnerships.....	17
Appendix.....	19

## ***Letter from the Director***

---

The Graduate Student Center celebrated its fifth year in 2006-07. In the relatively short amount of time we've been serving the University's graduate and professional students, we have become a fixture of life at Penn. Before the Center existed, there were few meaningful ways graduate and professional students across schools and graduate groups could interact; today **more than 50% of our grad students participate** in Grad Center conferences, language chats, workshops, and outings. A vibrant community has developed around our efforts.

However, with many years still ahead (as our cover notes), we strive to constantly make incremental improvements in the Center. This past year, we created two new positions: a Personal Development Fellow and an Outreach Fellow. The Outreach Fellow position has a two-fold purpose: to collect information about other campus programs for grad students and make it available to our constituents, and to work with other campus partners to develop new ways of serving students. More and more campus partners are looking to engage graduate students, and the Outreach Fellow is playing a critical role. Read more about this initiative on page 10.

We were pleased when Political Science student Meredith Wooten, a long-time Grad Center Fellow, agreed to take on the new challenge of Personal Development. Meredith's knowledge of the grad student body proved invaluable as she organized activities designed to strengthen life-skills, as well as programs supporting students with dependents and under-represented students. You can read about her specific accomplishments on pages 3 and 9.

***In the past five years,  
a vibrant community  
has developed around our efforts.***

In the next year, the **Grad Center will support two new campus-wide initiatives:** (1) the "food year" programs that will be developed in conjunction with the Penn Reading Project text *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, and (2) the Intercultural Leadership Program, spearheaded by International Programs. I look forward to detailing more about these programs next year. We are also actively working with the Office of the Provost to develop more substantial ways of supporting students with children, and I hope to report another success story in this area next year as well.

Finally, I'd like to say a word about the Graduate Student Associations Council, better known as GSAC. At the end of last year, GSAC and GAPSAs merged into a larger graduate student government, which is now simply called GAPSAs. Over the years, **GSAC's vision for doctoral student support has guided the Grad Center's programming.** Indeed, GSAC officers conceived the Navigating the Dissertation and Navigating the Grant programs. Their financial commitments and leadership has been crucial to the Grad Center's success in supporting the University's doctoral students. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank GSAC's leaders for their unwavering support of the Grad Center's mission these past five years. It has been a privilege to work with such exceptional students. I look forward to continuing the work of supporting our doctoral students with the new GAPSAs leadership.

***Anita Mastroieni  
Director***

## ***2006-07 Grad Center Stats***

---

### **The Grad Center at a glance.....**

Average number of students using the Grad Center each weekday during the academic year	500	More information can be found on....Page 16
Grad Center programs organized	388	Page 7
Students registered for Grad Center programs	5,772	Page 11
Outside activities held in Grad Center space	518	Page 16
Individuals subscribed to Grad Center listserv	3,052	Page 5
Visits to Grad Center website	340,303	Page 15
Questions e-mailed to the Grad Center Gnome	182	Page 5
Graduate/Undergraduate mentoring pairs	162	Page 9
Cups of coffee served	77,120	Page 6
Number of tea bags used	18,898	Page 6

## *2006-07 Highlights*

---

### **English Language Chats & Cultural Exchange**

During the summer 2006, Assistant Director DeAnna Cheung organized our new English Language Chats & Cultural Exchange. The International TAs Program and the Office of International Programs greatly assisted with the publicity. New international grad students met with American volunteers weekly to practice their English and discuss American cultural norms. Conversation topics included travel, sports, American culture, Penn traditions, and games, such as Pictionary. **Over 100 students attended these sessions**, along with approximately 20 volunteers, and got their academic careers started on a fun and positive path.

### **Cultural Support Initiatives for Grad Students**

The Grad Center and VPUL Cultural Centers received a **diversity fund grant** from the Office of the Provost to create cultural support initiatives specifically for graduate and professional students. The Grad Center's Personal Development Fellow led the Diversity Initiative Task Force, which included staff from all the cultural centers as well as leaders from BGAPSA, LaGAPSA, and GASAAM. A web page was developed to promote activities and bundle together all the campus and community resources for under-represented graduate students ([www.gsc.upenn.edu/diversity](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/diversity)). Over the course of the year, **members of the task force organized a variety of events**, including a Multicultural Welcome Reception and Resource Fair, BGAPSA Student/Faculty Mixer; a trip to see the Philadelphia Museum of Arts' Tesoros exhibition; a panel discussion on Diversity in the Ivory Tower; and a BGAPSA Graduation Celebration. In addition to these events, we advertised dozens of community events and activities of interest to multicultural groups through our website.

*After three weeks,  
the grad student community embraced our green initiative.*

### **Green Initiative**

Over the years, we have struggled with the impact of our free coffee service. On one hand the coffee service is one of the Grad Center's biggest draws among grad students. On the other hand, the volume of Styrofoam cups that were used and discarded in the Center was growing exponentially. Switching to paper cups was viewed as making only a slight environmental improvement while significantly increasing our costs. In 2006-07, **we decided to eradicate disposable cups altogether**. Coffee and tea are still free, but students must bring their own travel mugs to fill up. After approximately three weeks of painful transition and discounted Grad Center mug sales, the grad student community embraced the concept. Now our students regularly carry travel mugs; we are very pleased to have retained free coffee while reducing our negative impact on the environment.

To complement this initiative, the Grad Center also invested in new, prominent recycling bins to make recycling easier. Finally, we screened an environmental documentary film series, which included *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Who Killed the Electric Car?*

### **Grad Center Fellows Reunion**

The year 2006-07 marked the fifth anniversary of the Grad Center. We celebrated the occasion with an end-of-year “reunion” of students and alumni who have worked at the Center. **More than 30 current and former Fellows attended**, and it was a particular pleasure to show off improvements to the Center, such as our elevator, to alumni who haven’t been to campus recently.

### **GradFest07**

This past year, GAPSA leadership proposed to organize a celebratory, defining experience for grad students that would become an annual tradition. Grad Center staff supported this initiative whole-heartedly, by assisting with planning, creating a website ([www.gsc.upenn.edu/gradfest](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/gradfest)), taking registration, and staffing activities the day of the event. **Over 800 students enjoyed**

**GradFest07** on Saturday, May 5. The Grad Center has agreed to be a full sponsor for GradFest08, already scheduled for May 3, 2008. We look forward to helping GAPSA grow this event into a lively tradition for graduate students at Penn!



### **Student Government Restructure**

In the summer of 2006, leadership of GAPSA and GSAC – the main student governing bodies for graduate and professional students -- began earnest conversations about reducing redundancy and streamlining responsibilities between their organizations. A year-long campus-wide dialogue began, which included town meetings, presentations to University administration and trustees, and multiple proposals for a new, combined umbrella student government. A final proposal was successfully ratified by individual school governments in the spring 2007. **Grad Center staff supported this endeavor** by providing historical context, promoting and attending town meetings and presentations, and commenting on various drafts of the proposals. We look forward to working with the new GAPSA and SAS school governments in the coming years.

### **President’s and Provost’s Citation**

The President’s and Provost’s Citation for Exceptional Commitment to Graduate & Professional Student Life, which was created in 2006, is awarded to student leaders upon their graduation from Penn. In May, **five exemplary students received the award** at a ceremony at the Grad Center: Cay Bradley, Scott Brodsky, Lela Jacobsohn, Kevin Jude, and Joung Lee.



## *Services & Resources*

---

The Graduate Student Center provides services and resources to support students both at Penn and in Philadelphia.

### **The Grad Center Gnome**

Who do you ask when you don't know who to ask about Penn or Philadelphia? The Grad Center Gnome! The Gnome was created in 2004 as a friendly, easy way for graduate and professional students to get information online. To ask the Gnome a question, students just click on his picture on our web page, or go directly to [www.gsc.upenn.edu/services/gnome](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/services/gnome). Questions are automatically forwarded to Grad Center staff for a speedy and knowledgeable reply.

In 2006-07, **the Gnome received nearly 190 e-mailed queries** from students, up from 170 last year. Questions ranged from where to find writing help, car insurance, dissertation binding, student groups, SEPTA bus routes, etc. In addition, the Gnome proactively provides useful information for students: Tax tips, food trucks recommended by grad students, fun in Philadelphia during Spring Break, places to go for Thanksgiving, holiday safety tips, and late night study spots during finals.

### **Information Clearinghouse**

The Grad Center staff also presents information and events pertinent to graduate students on our website, on the Grad Tab of the Penn Portal, and through our weekly listserv announcements. Over 3,000 individuals are subscribed to the listserv, and our website gets more than 340,000 visits each year, **making the Grad Center a central hub for disseminating important information to graduate and professional students**. We provided information about student health insurance deadlines, dental open enrollment, dining plans, how to join graduate student groups, etc. We also promoted events organized by Career Services, the Penn Humanities Forum, Kelly Writers House, GAPSA, GSAC, the Library, Penn Volunteers in Public Services, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Communication Within the Curriculum (CWIC), and the University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium Committee. We place community opportunity service notices on our website. Finally, we provide a funding sources page to help advertise funding opportunities specifically geared towards graduate students including positions available through Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, CWIC, the Writing Center, and the Center for Teaching and Learning. We include resources for many of our programmatic areas on our website including Navigating the Dissertation, Navigating the Grant, Mentoring and Arts, Culture & Recreational Outings.

### **Notary Services**

We began providing notary services at the Grad Center in 2004 in order to help students handle the myriad of legal documents related to attending university in the U.S., buying a home, applying for utilities, absentee voting, etc. This past year, **176 documents were notarized at the Grad Center**.

### **Room Reservations**

The Center's rooms can be reserved at no charge by graduate students and by University offices holding events for graduate students. This service encourages graduate students to create and participate in group activities, thus helping to build community. **The Grad Center was reserved for nearly 520 activities** throughout the year; more information about our reservations can be found in Facilities on page 16.

### **Computing Services**

The Grad Center has been wireless since 2003, allowing students to access the Internet from anywhere in the building. The Grad Center also offers printing in our computer lab. This past year, the Center also added a handicap-accessible computer station, so that computing services are available to all students.

### **Coffee and Tea**

The Grad Center may be most well-known for serving free coffee and tea all day, every day, to graduate and professional students. This much-appreciated caffeine boost lures students back to the Center, helps build graduate community, generates goodwill, and keeps our students on their toes! Even though we moved to a more environmentally responsible, bring-your-own-mug system this past year, consumption did not suffer. **Students drank over 77,000 cups of coffee and nearly 19,000 cups of tea.** Additionally, we sold 430 travel mugs and 50 water bottles to thirsty students.

## Programs

---

During 2006-07, the Graduate Student Center **organized 388 programs** designed to enhance graduate community at Penn. **Nearly 5,800 students registered** for the 111 events for which we took sign-ups, an average of 52 students per event. This is an increase of 16.8% over last year. More information on program participants can be found on page 11.

Grad Center programs provide academic support, social networking, and personal development. New programs -- such as the Language Chats Kick Off, TA Happy Hour, Let's Talk about Sex, and the NSO One-Day Extravaganza -- were created, and popular events from past years were offered again. Nearly all of our programs are organized by Grad Center Fellows, with input by the Grad Center Advisory Board and individual student feedback. The result is a programming mix and that is by and for graduate and professional students. Program highlights are listed below.



## THE NAVIGATING SERIES

### CLASSROOM ★ DISSERTATION ★ GRANT

A JOINT PROJECT OF GAPSA AND THE GRADUATE STUDENT CENTER

### TA/PhD Support Programs (The Navigating Series)

The **Navigating the Classroom** Fellow worked with the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide workshops that fulfill the SAS teaching training requirement while also providing teaching skills to teaching assistants from other schools. In 2006-2007, **19 events were organized** on topics such as "Promoting Student Participation," "Talking About Race in the Classroom," "Dealing with Penn Students," and "Teaching Careers at Different Kinds of Schools." After fall grades were due, we also held a **TA Happy Hour** to celebrate the end of the semester.

The **Navigating the Dissertation** Fellow **organized 14 workshops** on topics such as "Basics of EndNote," "Speed-Networking for the Academic Job Market," "Handling the Stress of the Dissertation," and "How to Find a Job Outside Academia, Even if You Aren't Sure That You Want One," working with organizations such as the Library, Career Services, Counseling & Psychological Services, and Weingarten Learning Resources Center. In addition, we helped match more than 20 dissertating students with five **dissertation support groups** and offered two popular **Dissertation Boot Camp** sessions.

The **Navigating the Grant** Fellow organizes workshops that aid Penn grad students in the grant writing process. The program includes three tiers of increasing focus. The first tier introduces students to the general grant research and writing process through information sessions organized by area of study, such as Humanities and Engineering. The second tier of the program consists of **Q&A sessions on specific grants**, such as the NSF

and Fulbright, led by panels of students who successfully applied for those grants. The third tier of the program provides **peer-to-peer advising help** for graduate students who have completed drafts of their grant application. Each grant applicant meets with a grant advisor in their field who can proofread and critique their application before submission. During the 2006-2007 year, several graduate students utilized this service, and we currently have 33 active grant advisors.

Finally, the Navigating Series at the Grad Center was a cosponsor of the Career Services special program on “**Charting Your Course: Understanding The Changing Higher Education Landscape As You Plan Your Career In Academe.**” The lecture featured Chris M. Golde, Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and research director for the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate.

### **Arts, Culture and Recreational Outings (ARCO)**

This past year, the ARCO Fellow organized **30 events, which were enjoyed by over 674 students.** Part of the ARCO program’s goal is to provide grad students with access to local performances and sporting events. Working with PennPresents, Penn Athletics, Helium Comedy Club, the Philadelphia Phillies, etc., we provided students with **discounted tickets** to dozens of events throughout Philadelphia. Outings included the annual **Tour de Philly**, and trips to the Brandywine River Museum, Adventure Aquarium, and tubing on the Delaware River.

The ARCO Fellow also organizes **art exhibitions** at the Grad Center. A special highlight was a poster presentation featuring research findings by winners of the first GAPSAs-Provost Interdisciplinary Award. Another noteworthy exhibition was *Global Gnome: The world from a six inch perspective*, photographs showcasing our Garden Gnomes as they traveled across the world with Penn grad students. The exhibit was featured in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

### **Intellectual Programs**

For the first time this year, the Intellectual Programs Fellow organized a major scholarly conference featuring research by regional students and faculty. **The G8’s Response to Africa: Is it Making a Difference** was funded by the Office of the Provost. Keynote speaker, Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, and the panelists presented on a vast array of historical, social, and economic topics. In addition, the Intellectual Programs Fellow organized two **Wine Tastings** and a workshop on **Taking Classes Outside Your School** which featured representatives from Nursing, Bioethics, and Public Health. The Intellectual Programs area also cosponsored the Fontaine Society’s Annual Spring Conference, **Extremism in American Social and Political Life**, which included an address by Dr. Amy Gutmann. Finally, the Graduate Student Center and the Graduate School of Education co-sponsored a lunchtime talk, **Race, the Public Sphere and the Public Scholar**, featuring Dr. Clement Price.

## Personal Development

In addition to being responsible for the cultural support initiative (detailed on page 3), the Personal Development Fellow also organized five general programs in 2006-07, which were attended by 215 students. With support from GAPSA, we continued our successful **Personal Finance** series with workshops on home-buying and debt-management. In the spring, we coordinated with several groups and centers on campus to develop and host “**Let’s Talk about Sex**” – a sexual education resource fair designed specifically for graduate and professional students. More than 150 students attended this fun and informative event. In addition, the Personal Development Fellow worked to continue the **Students with Dependents** initiative, offering discounted tickets to family-friendly events as well as promoting activities such as Career Services’ “Parenting in the Academy” series and “Peanut Butter and Jams” concerts at World Café Live. The Personal Development Fellow maintained **the Students with Dependents website** ([www.gsc.upenn.edu/swd](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/swd)), adding new sections for “Parenting in the News” and a message board. Finally, we conducted a survey of approximately 1,000 Penn graduate and professional students to gather information about our student parents to use for developing future programming.

## Film & Broadcast Events

More than **30 films** were shown during our weekly DVD screenings at the Center. Popular series included the Philly Film Fest, Will Smith Film Festival, Green Documentary Film Series, and Corporate Scandals on Film. In addition, this year the Grad Center began showing the broadcast of Comedy Central’s ***The Daily Show and Colbert Report***, ending each day on a fun and informative note. We also broadcast the **Cricket World Cup** to appreciative students who could not otherwise get the satellite feed. Finally, we worked with GAPSA to provide discounted tickets to **film premiers** at the Bridge Cinema near campus; students enjoyed *Casino Royale* and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* through this special program.

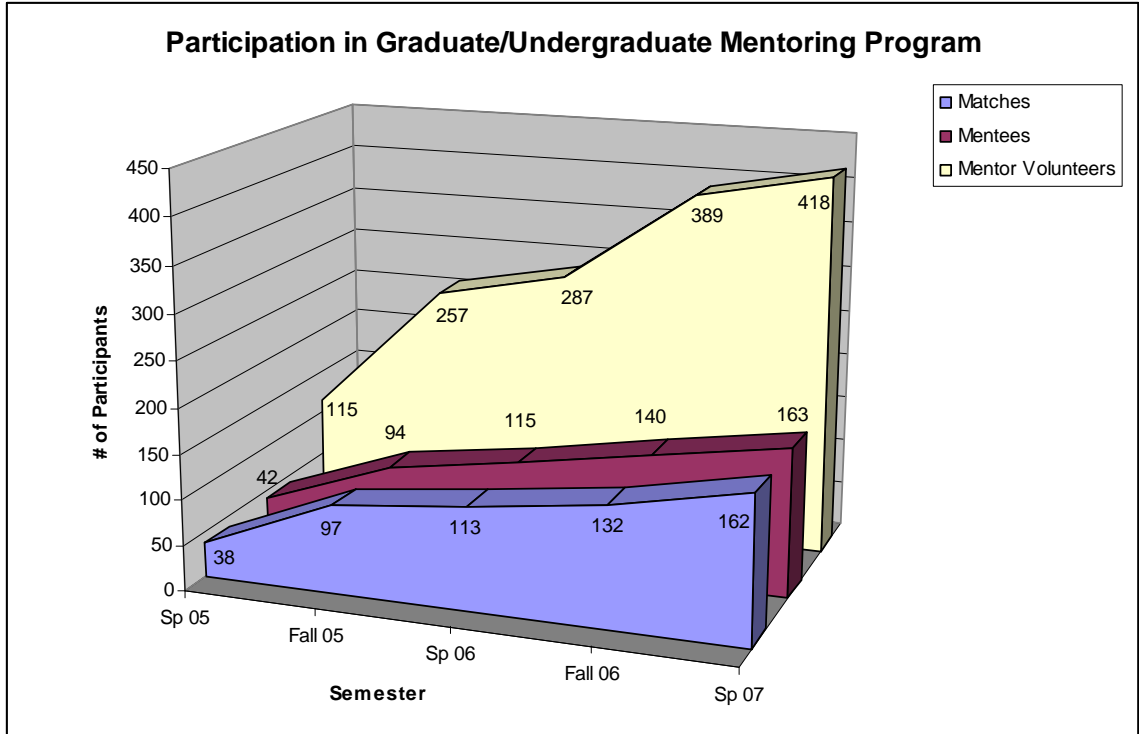
## Language Chats

Language Chats provide an opportunity for graduate and professional students to come together each week and practice a variety of different languages, including **French, Japanese, English, Chinese, Kiswahili, German, Latin, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian**. This volunteer-run program is a great example of the Grad Center’s success in empowering students to create community.

## The Graduate/Undergraduate Mentoring Program

The Graduate/Undergraduate Mentoring Program matches undergraduates at Penn who are considering graduate school with current graduate and professional students at Penn, so that they can learn first-hand about graduate school: what it’s really like, how to apply, and how to succeed. Academically-curious undergraduates can be assigned graduate student mentors in several fields, and have the option of requesting new mentors each semester to gain a wider variety of perspectives. This year, as with last year, our primary objective was to **spread greater awareness** of the Mentoring program, especially among undergraduates. The Mentoring Fellow publicized the program through emails, links on other organizations’ websites, and a large, new banner displayed on Locust Walk. As a result

of these efforts, the **program continues to grow impressively**: from 132 active matched pairs to 162 during the course of the year. The data from the past several semesters show a very positive trend:



During 2006-07, we added to the program by giving undergrads the option of selecting mentors based on cultural preference in addition to academic background, to improve mentoring for under-represented students. We worked with Career Services to organize six **information panels** for undergraduates; each featured graduate mentor volunteers speaking on graduate programs in Area and Culture Studies, the Sciences, the Arts, Pathways for Engineers, Public Service, and the Social Sciences. In the spring, we also held our first-ever **Mentoring Matters! Luncheon** for all participants in the Mentoring Program; the lunch featured Judith Vredenburgh, CW'70, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Ms. Vredenburgh spoke about the value and importance of mentoring relationships to both mentors and mentees. Finally, the Mentoring Program's **Coffee Talk program** provides \$8 gift cards each semester to each mentoring pair to encourage them to meet in person at a campus coffee shop; 22 mentoring pairs took advantage of the program in 2006-07.

## Outreach

Outreach was a new initiative for the Graduate Student Center in 2006-07. The Outreach Coordinator position was created to **establish and strengthen partnerships** with campus organizations in order to enhance program and service offerings for graduate students. Like the NSO Coordinator, the Outreach Coordinator is a GSE master's student in

Higher Education Management who fulfills an assistantship requirement while gaining valuable experience.

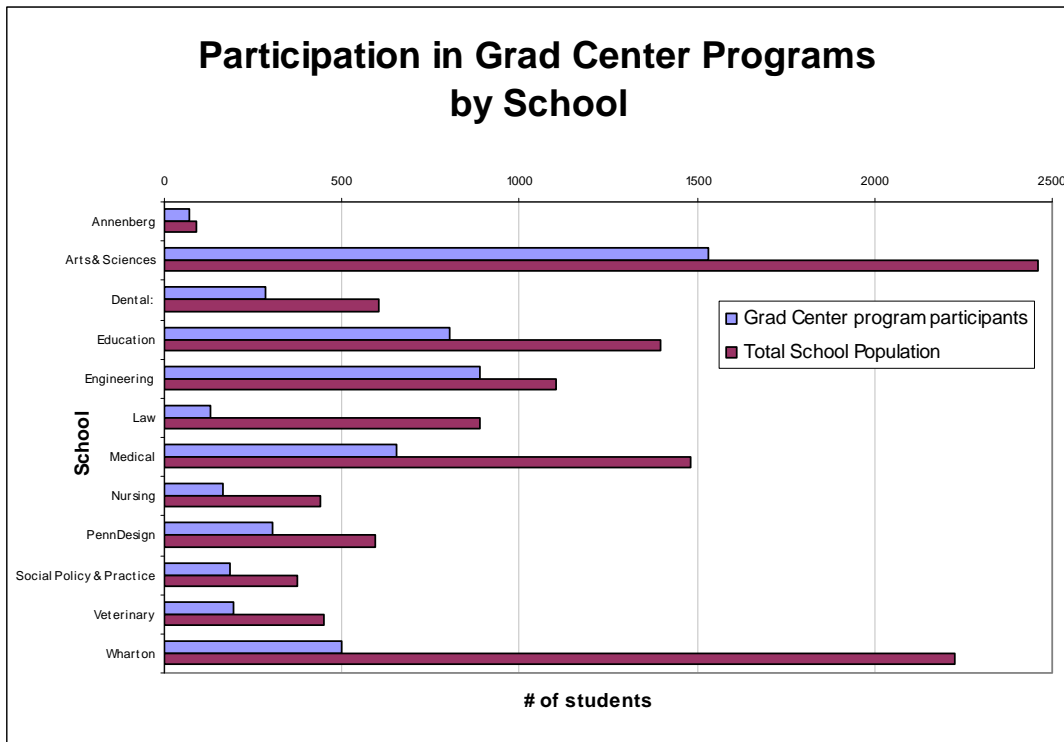
One of the main purposes of the Outreach Coordinator is to **publicize campus events** targeted to graduate and professional students. The Outreach Coordinator collects materials from various campus offices and distributes them at the Grad Center, and maintains a webpage listing campus resource centers and their event calendars. In addition, the Outreach Coordinator facilitates the Grad Center’s cosponsorship of programs and began planning exciting **new programs** with the Office of Health Education, the First Step Program, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the Kelly Writers House. These programs will be offered in the fall 2007.

Finally, the Outreach Coordinator posts information about **local community service projects**, along with links to Civic House and the Center for Community Partnerships, for graduate and professionals interested in volunteerism.

### Program Participants

**More than one-half of the University’s graduate and professional students** registered for Grad Center programs: 5,772 in total, representing a robust mix of graduate and professional students from across the University.

The chart and table below show the percentage of students *within each school* who register for Grad Center programs. We can see, for example, that over 78% of Annenberg students registered for at least one Grad Center program in 2006-07.



School affiliation	Number of Grad Center program participants	Total school population	% of school population participating in Grad Center programs
Engineering	886	1,102	<b>80.40%</b>
Annenberg	69	88	<b>78.41%</b>
Arts & Sciences	1,532	2,462	<b>62.23%</b>
Education	803	1,395	<b>57.56%</b>
Design	306	593	<b>51.60%</b>
Social Policy & Practice	185	373	<b>49.60%</b>
Dental	282	606	<b>46.53%</b>
Medical	654	1,481	<b>44.16%</b>
Veterinary	194	448	<b>43.30%</b>
Nursing	163	439	<b>37.13%</b>
Wharton	497	2,228	<b>22.31%</b>
Law	129	888	<b>14.53%</b>

As the data illustrate, **more than 40% of students in nine of the 12 schools registered for Grad Center programs throughout the year.** These numbers reflect only the Grad Center programs for which we take registration. More than half our programs do not require registration; therefore the actual student involvement in our programs is much higher.

## ***2006 Graduate & Professional New Student Orientation and Recruitment Activities***

---

Graduate & Professional New Student Orientation (NSO) offers students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the campus and Philadelphia community, as well as become acquainted with the many important resources provided by the University. While the 12 graduate schools furnish their own academic orientation, the Graduate Student Center strives to introduce graduate and professional students to life outside of the classroom.

**More than 4,300 students began graduate and professional programs** at Penn in 2006, arriving on campus as early as June and as late as September. In order to accommodate as many students as possible, NSO was organized into three distinct orientation sessions: orientation for early arrivers, orientation for late August arrivers, and orientation for last minute arrivers, with programs repeated at different dates and times. As in the past, graduate and professional orientation was planned with the assistance of the 12 graduate schools and resource centers at Penn.

### ***Nearly 1,200 students registered for NSO programs.***

For the last five years, the Grad Center has hired the NSO Coordinator from the Higher Education Management program of the Graduate School of Education. This successful partnership provides the NSO coordinator with a valuable educational and professional experience and gives the Grad Center an especially qualified student for the job. We are particularly proud that all of our NSO Coordinators have gone on to successful careers in higher education, many at Penn.

#### **New Student Communications**

During the early summer months of 2006, all incoming graduate and professional students received a **welcome letter and magnet** from the Grad Center which conveyed to students important information about starting at Penn, NSO events, and included important URLs for new students. The annual Graduate & Professional Student Resource Guide was updated for the 2006-2007 school year. At each individual school orientation, students were each given a **Welcome Packet** from the Graduate Student Center, which included the Resource Guide, an invitation to the President's Welcome Reception, a flyer with URL links to the Pennbook and the Penn Safety Video, information on GAPSA, and the NSO Calendar.

#### **New Student Programs**

As in previous years, the NSO Coordinator surveyed students to ascertain the effectiveness of orientation seminars and to gather suggestions for future orientations. Feedback indicated **students were looking for more social opportunities** in addition to the information sessions. Thus, in addition to seminars focused on transportation, safety, health insurance, and living in Philadelphia, NSO also provided such activities as campus

tours, walking tours of the city, and a Ride the Ducks trip. Nearly 1,200 students registered for these NSO events.

The last minute arrivers were given an abbreviated version of each of the seminars, as well as a campus tour and happy hour. This first-time **One Day Orientation Extravaganza**, held over Labor Day Weekend, was well attended by over 120 students. Current and past Grad Center fellows, advisory board members, and GAPSA representatives volunteered at the event, ensuring a smooth-running day.

Through our New Student Orientation programs, not only do students have assistance in acclimating to Penn and Philadelphia, but they become familiarized with the Grad Center's programs available to graduate and professional students. New Student Orientation has become a vital part of life at Penn and we anticipate that it will continue to grow in the future.

### **Student Recruitment**

The NSO Coordinator was also involved in the recruitment/admissions process for the University's 12 graduate and professional schools by providing tours of campus, presentations on graduate student life at Penn, and participation in resource fairs and accepted students' days. **Nine of our 12 schools utilized at least one of these services.** In addition, Grad Center staff field admissions-related emails and phone calls each year from prospective students

Penn is one of only a handful of universities to provide a Graduate Student Center. The Grad Center's presence in the recruitment process allows us to showcase this valuable resource, helping students make an informed choice about matriculating at Penn.

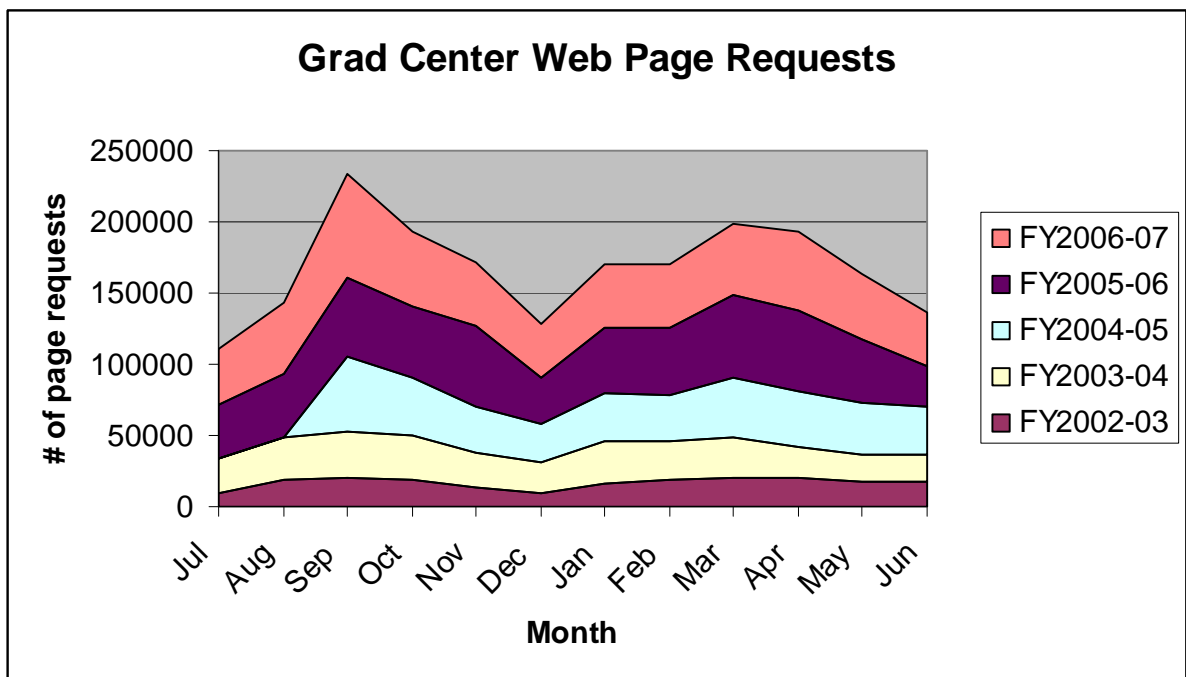
## Website

### Redesign Process

Under the direction of the Assistant Director, the Web Fellow and the Navigating the Grant Fellow (who had web design experience, a skill we could not ignore!) took the lead of managing the redesign of the Graduate Student Center website. Focus group meetings with Grad Center Fellows and a survey of active program participants helped to shape the structure of the new website. While the process has been slow, the methodical approach to the redesign will ensure that **the site reflects the Graduate Student Center's mission, vision and personality** while allowing for flexibility of content. We anticipate unveiling the new design in 2008.

### Website Usage

During the course of the year, the Grad Center website had **more than 340,000 unique visits, during which 574,176 pages were viewed.** This represents a 26% increase over our figures from last year, demonstrating that the Grad Center is a growing source of information for our students. The number of page requests is graphically shown below for the last five fiscal years.



## *Facilities*

---

Graduate and professional students use our building in two ways: informal hanging out and reserving the Center for formal group activities.

### **Hanging Out**

Grad students come to the Center to study, relax, eat, meet, nap, get coffee, check e-mail, play board games, attend programs, and more. They bring their children, spouses, significant others, parents, and pets. The Grad Center has clearly become the home-away-from-home for many graduate and professional students at Penn.

We attempt to ascertain how many students are hanging out in as unobtrusive manner as possible. An automatic counter on the door leading to our main space determines the number of students who enter the Common Room each day:

<b>Average number of students using the Grad Center:</b>	
Each weekday during the academic year	500
Each weekend during the academic year	110
Each weekday during the summer	160

This table does not include usage of the meeting and study rooms on the second and third floors where we do not have door counters and staff to gather data; therefore, these figures reflect a minimum usage of the Graduate Student Center.

### **Reservations**

The Center's rooms can be reserved at no charge by graduate students and by University offices holding events for graduate students. The online reservation request system is quick and easy. The Center is also considered "neutral" territory and is centrally-located, making us a convenient location for students from different schools to come together. **This service encourages graduate students to create and participate in group activities, thus helping to build community.**

In 2006-07, the Center was reserved for 518 events representing a wide variety of academic and co-curricular activities. The breakdown of reservations was:

<b>Number of reservations in the Grad Center:</b>	
Student Group Activities	232
Study Sessions	181
TA Office Hours	39
University Office Activities	38
Classes/Recitations	28

The variety and quantity of activities taking place in the Graduate Student Center is a testament to the vibrancy of our graduate and professional student community, and the role of the Grad Center in that community.

## Partnerships

---

### **Graduate Student Center Advisory Board**

The 23-member advisory board is comprised of graduate and professional students from schools across the University. The board also includes representatives from GAPSA, GSAC, BGAPSA, and LaGAPSA. See the full list of Board members on page 20.

Board members meet regularly to advise Grad Center staff and Fellows on programming and policy. In 2006-07, **the Board addressed several issues**, including our environmental initiative, showing regular broadcasts at the Center, and layout of the space.

### **Graduate & Professional Graduate Student Assembly (GAPSA)**

The Grad Center and GAPSA worked on several important initiatives together in 2006-07, most notably GradFest and the student government mergers (detailed on page 4). In addition, we cosponsored several activities, including the Personal Finance Series and movie premiers. GAPSA continued their cosponsorship of our Graduate/Undergraduate Mentoring Programs. Grad Center staff sell tickets for GAPSA events, and provide advice and guidance on campus-wide issues.

<b>GAPSA contributions to the Grad Center:</b>	
Graduate/Undergraduate Mentoring cosponsorship	\$2,500
Personal Finance series	\$600
Taking Classes Outside Your School	\$600
<i>2006-07 total contributions</i>	<i>\$3,700</i>

### **Graduate Student Associations Council (GSAC)**

Likewise, the Grad Center partners with GSAC in many areas and they provide us with funding. GSAC continued their generous sponsorship of the Grad Center's Navigating Series by providing funds, input, and publicity.

<b>GSAC contributions to the Grad Center:</b>	
The Navigating Series	\$15,000
<i>2006-07 total contributions</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>

## **Other Partnerships**

The Graduate Student Center cosponsored or partnered with the following organizations in 2006-07:

*Student Organizations:* BGAPSA, Equal Justice Foundation, Fontaine Society, GAASAM, LaGAPSA, and Lambda Grads

*University Offices:* Annenberg School for Communication, Center for Teaching and Learning, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS), Career Services, Office of Community Housing, Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships, Graduate School of Education, Greenfield Intercultural Center\*, Office of Health Education, Office of Strategic Initiatives/First Step Program\*, Kelly Writers House, La Casa Latina, LGBT Center, Makuu, Office of International Programs, PAACH, University Museum\*, School of Arts & Sciences, SAS External Affairs\*, School of Engineering & Applied Science, Office of Off-Campus Living, Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Department of Recreation\*, Van Pelt Library, Penn Humanities Forum\*, School of Nursing, Bioethics Program\*, Public Health Program, Public Safety, Penn Transit, Penn Bookstore, PennPresents, Penn Athletics, VPUL, Penn Women's Center, Student Financial Services, Weingarten Learning Resources Center, and the Wharton School.

*Outside Organizations and Individuals:* Jeffrey Benjamin, CampusPhilly\*, Express Mortgage Group, Helium Comedy Club\*, cyclist Al Parker GFA'02, Philly CarShare, Recycle for Breast Cancer, UBS Business Services\*, and World Café Live.

## Appendix

---

### **2006-07 Grad Center Staff**

*Director:*

Anita Mastroieni

*Assistant Director:*

DeAnna Cheung

*Arts, Culture & Recreational Outings Fellows:*

Lizelle Arellano (GSE)

Kara McGrorty (SAS CGS)

*Intellectual Programs Fellow:*

Aida Gureghian (SAS History)

*Mentoring Fellow:*

Sarah Salwen (SAS Political Science)

*New Student Orientation Coordinator:*

Brenda Brand (GSE)

*Outreach Coordinator:*

Aviva Hirschfeld (GSE)

*Personal Development Fellow:*

Meredith Wooten (SAS Political Science)

*TA/PhD Support Fellows:*

Nona Carter (SAS EALC)

Rebecca Cutler (SAS History)

Dana Dabek-Milstein (SAS CGS)

John Roper (SAS History)

*Web Fellow:*

Priya Maheswari (SAS CGS)

## **2006-07 Grad Advisory Board**

Cay Bradley (GSE/SP2)  
Mete Civelek (SEAS)  
Brian Decker (Law)  
Ellen Diebold (GSE)  
Noah Drezner (GSE)  
Nadine Gabbadon (ASC)  
Mosha He (SEAS)  
Joung Lee (SAS Fels)  
Sainath Lolayekar (Wharton)  
Kudakwashe Maposa (Wharton)  
Nicole Maurantonio (ASC/SAS History)  
Linda Meiberg (SAS Art & Archeology Mediterranean World)  
Jennifer Nguyen (Med)  
Hana Oh (SEAS)  
Agnes Pambid (Nursing)  
Susana Ramirez (ASC)  
Colette Shen (Med/SEAS)  
Mike Smith (SAS Biology)  
Ameera Thomas (Dental)  
Travis Wilson (Wharton)  
Micki Young (Vet)  
Tony Yuen (SAS Economics)  
Abu Zuberi (Design)

### **University Committee Service**

In 2006-07, Grad Center staff members served on the following University committees:

- Committee on Academic & Related Affairs
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Symposium Executive Committee
- International Partners Outreach Group
- Transit Advisory Board

### **Professional Conferences**

In 2006-07, Grad Center staff members attended the following professional conferences:

- Ivy Graduate Leaders Summit
- Council of Graduate Schools Annual Meeting
- NASPA/ACPA Joint Conference
- Annual “Dwarves & Elves” Meeting