



Undergraduate Assembly
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

President and Vice President Platform Mid-Year Status Report 45th Session

Michelle Xu, President

Jay Shah, Vice President

December 3, 2017

The President and Vice President's platform sets the foundation for the overarching priorities for the Undergraduate Assembly that given session. Various initiatives, lobbying efforts, and projects may fall under each category. This status report highlights the current progress in our priorities and goals.

1. Facilitate a Campus Climate that Emphasizes and Prioritizes Mental Wellness

Restructure Club Recruitment Policies

Michelle Xu, Jay Shah, and Michael Krone, the Student Activities Council (SAC) Chair, have been working with the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and SAC to restructure club recruitment policies to reduce unnecessary competition and humanize the process. At the beginning of the semester, SAC with the guidance of UA, OSA, and Wharton Council, sent a survey to all freshmen and sophomores gathering information about club recruitment. They will be processing this information and meeting with certain groups to discuss their recruitment procedures. SAC will be collecting information on the recruitment policies of clubs as an entrance mechanism to the Spring Activities Fair.

Increase awareness of Penn's wellness resources through NSO programming and more

This year, the UA continued the Ice Cream Social during NSO in partnership with Penn Wellness and the Counseling and Psychological Services Office (CAPS). Turnout was not as successful as had been hoped given that the event had to be moved to a rain location. However, Michelle Xu, Anthony Williams (College '19), and Maria Curry (Wharton '20) recreated the event and collaborated with the Social Planning and Events Committee (SPEC) and Class Boards (CB) to have the CAPS Forum. Turnout was high and many people from Penn Wellness and CAPS felt that they had productive conversations with people during the event.

Additionally, Kevin Zhou (New Student '21), and Jess Andrews (Associate '20) have explored many avenues to gain more exposure for CAPS during New Student Orientation (NSO). After speaking with Dr. Bill Alexander, Director of CAPS, and Lulu Kaliher, Director of the First Year College Houses, they discovered that it is infeasible to have CAPS give their own isolated presentation or have them present within the First-Year College House presentations due to logistical constraints. As a result, they will be pursuing more feasible options, such as integrating mental health into the Penn Reading Project assignment and presentation as well as the Penn Life Sketches. They are also developing a survey in collaboration with the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) to gauge the mental health climate on campus and gather data about awareness and utilization of mental health resources on campus.

Kevin Zhou and Jess Andrews are also working in conjunction with GAPSA to secure CAPS satellite offices.

Brian Goldstein (Secretary) and Jason Kim (College '20) are working on including CAPS as a singular mandatory stop on the tours that are run by peer mentors in the College of Arts and Sciences and School of Nursing and encouraging the mentors to talk about the resources of CAPS to reduce stigma. They have received positive feedback about this initiative from advisors of the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Nursing, and the Wharton School. They will be scheduling meetings with them and the School of Engineering next semester to further advocate for this project.

Through social media and other events, the UA has been promoting CAPS' expanded hours, online resources, events, and increased staff.

Participate in ICare training

The UA is in contact with CAPS and have tentatively planned an ICare training for all UA members in the beginning of the spring semester in January.

Mental Health Resources on Syllabi

Simon Miller ('College 20) and SCUE have been working with administrators on how to include mental health resources onto syllabi to help spread mental health information to all students. After passing through the Faculty Senate, mental health resources are now recommended to be included in syllabi for all professors. Simon Miller is now working on making sure professors are actually including these resources as well as asking them to spend time talking about them to their

classes. He will be reaching out to a number of larger (intro) classes to help facilitate discussion of these mental health resources starting next semester. He will also be reaching out to Mental Wellness Ambassadors within each department to help get more professors on board with including the resources on their syllabi.

2. Reduce the Costs Associated with Attending Penn

Reduce annual tuition increases

Eric Tepper, past UA Secretary, Michelle Xu, and Nile Nwogu (Wharton '19) will be continuing the work that Eric Tepper and Kat McKay, past UA President, established the prior session. This year, the unsustainability of the increasing costs associated with attending Penn have been conveyed to the President's Office, the Provost's Office, and the Executive Vice President's Office and others. They will work towards gathering data, stories, and creating a presentation for the Trustee Committee on Budget and Finance's upcoming meeting in February. Prior to this meeting, they will be trying to meet with Trevor C. Lewis, Vice President of of Budget and Management Analysis.

Reduce course costs and cost transparency

From last year's lobbying efforts from Kat McKay and Shawn Srolovitz, the Student Committee on Undergraduate Education (SCUE) Chair, the University has officially eliminated course fees this year, which is a crucial step in the right direction for this project. Moving forward, the UA wants to again convey how important it is for professors to keep their course costs transparent and as low as possible. Michelle Xu will continue to work with SCUE and plan to bring this up at an upcoming Council of Undergraduate Deans (CUD) meeting.

Additionally, George Yang (Nursing '20) and Haley Morin (SCUE '19) are trying to reduce the fee for making up a missed clinical. They are aiming to have the cost be split amongst the students that make up the clinical, rather than a flat \$300. They also want to replace the incentive though, so that future students don't become complacent about missing clinicals. Next semester, George Yang plans to meet with Dr. Julie Sochalski, the Associate Dean for Academic programs in the Nursing School.

Also, Grace Kim (Associate '21) is currently working on a survey to assess extraneous course costs associated with Fine Arts classes and will be working with the department to increase awareness of these costs and to have them either help subsidize or eliminate costs.

Make class events such as Hey Day and Feb Club more affordable

Through Michelle Xu's prior advocacy as UA Treasurer, funds were prioritized to Hey Day and Feb Club to make these events more affordable. Samantha Shea, the current UA Treasurer, is conducting fall budget/audit meetings to follow up on those initiatives and will work with the budget committee to keep those costs low in the upcoming budget season in February.

3. Ensure that Penn is a Safe and Inclusive Environment for All of its Students

Partner with PVP and SAC so more students receive education about interpersonal violence prevention

Due to the large amount of groups on campus and the limited capabilities of the Penn Violence Prevention Office (PVP), this project was pivoted to help promote the office's new Anti-Violence Engagement Network (AVEN) initiative. Jay Shah invited members of the PVP office to UA Steering to help promote their resources to all the groups. The UA is currently underway of completing the program and will be moving onto Step 3 of the program ("Educating your members") at the beginning of the spring semester.

Lobby for resources for DACA students

UA Cabinet has conveyed the need for housing, food, mental health, and legal resources for DACA students to the President's Office, the Provost's Office, the Executive Vice President's office, and more. Jay Shah has created a working group with the United Minorities Council (UMC), Latinx Coalition (LC), and students from the Transnational Legal Clinic to unify lobbying efforts. Earlier this year the UA passed a resolution urging the University to announce its commitment to meet the needs of students affected by DACA. So far, the University has committed to resources for housing and food. Legal consultation is being provided for by the Transnational Legal Clinic but legal representation is yet to be confirmed.

Foster more collaboration between organizations to address wide-reaching campus concerns

Jay Shah has been meeting with every group in UA Steering to address their goals and missions for the 2017-2018 year. At every individual meeting and certain UA Steerings, Jay Shah has been compiling lists of projects that constituents would like to work on and have been working to assign them to UA members. He has also been incorporating more topic-focused discussion-based UA Steering meetings to try to facilitate more discussion and collaboration between groups. Some of the topics that have been discussed are sexual assault and violence on campus, mental health resources, students affected by DACA, event registration policies, and hazing on campus.

4. Academic Initiatives

Publicize the expansion of GAPSA and UA mentoring services

Little work has been done marketing this or any other UA service other than an all-school email. Next semester, Jordan Andrews, the UA Communications Director, will be working on launching various marketing campaigns to boost knowledge of our services.

Evaluating academic advising

Jay Shah, Sravya Alla (New Student '21), Jennifer Richards (Associate '21) and Simon Miller (College '20) are continuing to work on improving the academic advising experience for Penn students. The two aspects they are focusing on are academic advisors and peer advising. They are working closely with SCUE in an effort to ensure that the advising offices reflect the needs of the students as well as standardizing experiences for students. Regarding peer advising, they are working on incentive mechanisms to ensure more follow up and thus a closer relationship with peer advisors.

Supporting Asian American Studies

Michelle Xu, Jay Shah, and Kevin Zhou have continued to work with the Asian American Studies Undergraduate Advisory Board (ASAM UAB) to lobby Penn to hire another full-time ASAM faculty member after passing a resolution last session. This issue has been brought up to the Provost's Office and University Council. They have discovered that the main hiring power lies with the departments so they will continue to work with the ASAM UAB to meet with college deans and lobby the administration.

5. Meeting Students' Space Needs

Increasing performing arts spaces available to student groups by modifying currently underutilized space

The need for more performing arts spaces is becoming increasingly apparent. UA Cabinet has conveyed this sentiment to the President's Office, the Provost's Office, the Executive Vice President's Office, and the Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES) Office. Also, at the Trustee Facilities and Campus Planning Committee Liaison meeting, Michelle Xu and Kyle O'Neil asked for more modifiable performing arts spaces in New College House West and it seemed well-received. Jay Shah and SAC members Michael Krone, Noah Lee, and Kevin Myers met with PAC Exec to discuss short and long term goals for this issue. There have been a few new spaces identified in the Solomon Building that are being utilized, however this is not enough to meet the demand. They will continue working with the Executive Vice President's Office to identify more spaces as new buildings are built and advocate for constructing new spaces for the future.

Create an international student resource center

Continuing on a project from last year, the UA is partnering with the Assembly of International Students (AIS) to create a physical space to bring international students together. The aim is to have that space at Perry World House because of its global focus. This year, the administration has agreed to open up the space for dedicated time to AIS constituents as a trial run.

UA Cabinet - Administrator Meetings To Date

9/12 Counseling and Psychological Services

9/15 Provost's Office

9/29 International Student Scholar Services

10/3 President's Office

10/11 Vice Provost for University Life

10/12 Executive Vice President's Office

10/19 Facilities and Real Estate Services

10/26 Business Services

11/3 Meetings of the Committees of the Board of Trustees

12/5 Student Registration and Financial Services