This is the time of year when nostalgia takes over. The everyday stress of campus life and one long, severe winter, still buried somewhere in our collective memory, gives way to Seniors creating their Penn bucket lists, the excitement of newly elected student leaders, the alumni who will soon be on campus and sunny afternoons on College Green. In short, spring at Penn is focused on the possibilities of what will be as well as reveling in what was.

Here in the Office of Student Affairs, we are very familiar with this bifurcated focus. At once we are encouraging students to grow, create and enhance themselves, their organizations and various campus events. At the same time, we hope they will reflect and develop awareness of themselves, others and those who paved the way for their current successes.

Over the summer and in the coming year, we hope to engage with Alumni who interacted with The Office of Student Affairs (formerly Office of Student Life) during their time at Penn and see how we might be able to connect you with our campus-based Quakers. Perhaps you have a great personal experience which would make for an interesting blog post? Maybe you would consider coming back to Penn to speak or present a workshop? The possibility of mentoring a current student leader may be of interest. Clearly, we're open to ideas. We believe that strengthening this interaction with alumni who wore similar shoes to our current students will only improve their ability to continue to change Penn for the better.

Recently we added a sign to the front of the office touting the Office of Student Affairs as the place “where Penn comes to life.” While the Penn of today may not be the exact same Penn as yesterday or tomorrow, it is no less true now than it was 25 years ago that Penn is what it is because of the students on the campus at that time. They give life to our programs, residences and classrooms. While the specific issues or events may be different, the skills our students develop have not drastically changed. Integrity, ethical decision-making, leading by example, articulating a vision; these are things which persist long after life at Penn. We hope the Office of Student Affairs can be a point of connection for current students and alumni alike, to continue that journey of self-discovery and improvement. We look forward to engaging with all of you in the coming months.

- This year OSA started a new office tradition called “It's all about you day”. On this randomly selected day of the year an unsuspecting office member is surprised with gifts and a desk covered in balloons streamers and decorations. This Fisticous holiday allows us to show our appreciation for each other year round.

- OSA gets around! Between all nine OSA employees the group has traveled to 26 countries on four continents!
If you could relive any moment at Penn what would it be?

I would relive any number of nights spent with my best friends from Penn, dancing, laughing, and occasionally making bootleg 2am mac ‘n cheese in electric water boilers. I would also relive post-Fling leftover candy.

Anything else you want to add about your time at Penn or your intersection with OSA?

OSA holds a really special place in my heart. I had a ton of fun serving on SPEC and am so grateful to have had the chance to organize some of Penn’s most memorable events. Katie, Rodney and many others at OSA helped shape me into the person I am today by supporting my personal growth, making me a better leader and a more outgoing person overall. I worked at the OSA front desk for work study and loved being the first point of contact for students and other visitors.
This year has been a very difficult but productive year for the Student Activities Council (SAC). As of Fall 2012, SAC has been under a new group moratorium, meaning that we have not been funding new student groups. The moratorium has always been viewed as a temporary measure, giving SAC the opportunity to better understand and address funding issues among the current recognized organizations. There were two primary reasons for implementing the moratorium: high levels of student group debt and rising facilities costs. The first was large problem because student groups had little accountability for the debt they accrued. Thanks to previous executive boards, SAC was able to implement a change in our online system, allowing group treasurers, SAC Exec, and OSA financial advisors to get monthly notifications if their organizations were in debt. This initiative was supplemented by a new debt policy; now, when groups accumulate higher levels of debt, their budgets are progressively cut. We are excited that these projects have yielded success and student group debt has been substantially reduced.

The second problem that SAC faces is increasing facilities costs. Understanding the variety of expenses which make up “facilities” was a monumental task in itself. As part of our research, we performed a detailed accounting audit of invoices from nearly every SAC-recognized group that used on-campus facilities for performances and events over the past two years. Through this process, SAC Exec’s internal calculation yielded that the actual cost of spaces is increasing anywhere from 4 to 10 percent, depending on the facility. Prior to this more in depth analysis, we understood the overall increase to be even larger. Our work over the past few months has led to the realization that our original figure was a result of combining the increase in the actual cost of spaces with a large increase in student group spending; we had previously been viewing two different factors as one.

The conclusion has led SAC Exec to re-evaluate the moratorium. If our branch of student government remains in the black at the end of this fiscal year, we will recommend a partial lift of the moratorium to the SAC general body. The terms of the partial lift specifically means that we are projecting the moratorium to remain in place for performing arts groups, but to be lifted for groups that fall within other categories. After consultation with the Performing Arts Council (PAC), SAC has realized that the model of paying for performing arts facilities after the events take place is not sustainable, as there is no check on how much is spent. We will be working closely with PAC Exec in the upcoming year to re-examine that funding model, so that we can fund performing arts groups to the best of our ability, while remaining fiscally responsible.

The work we’ve accomplished this year has been great; we’ve parsed out facilities costs, worked on making our branch of student government more transparent to the Penn student body, and made progress towards being able to recognize more student groups. We are excited to see what next year will bring!

With Love From, Kanisha Parthasarathy, SAC Chair

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**WHO IS OSA? STAFF INTERVIEW WITH DANIELLE CROWL**

When did you start working at Penn and when did you start working in OSA? Fortunately for me, my first job at Penn was with OSA. I have worked in the OSA since September 2013 and am just wrapping up my first academic year here. It has been an amazing year getting to know all the staff and working with some incredible students!

What is your role in OSA? I am an associate director in the office and I advise the Freshman and Sophomore Class Boards as well as SPEC, the Social Planning and Events Committee. These groups are branches of student government whose focus is on programming large scale events, either for their class as the Class Board or for the entire student body as SPEC.

What do you enjoy most about working in OSA? I really enjoy the busy and bustling environment in OSA. Students are always coming in and out, and I love that they feel comfortable enough to hang out in my office and talk about work-related things or just about what is happening in their lives. In addition to the students, the rest of the OSA staff is so great and supportive, especially when my schedule is so crazy that I don’t have time to think! It’s not your typical office environment and that makes coming to work each day different and exciting!

Where is your favorite place to eat on campus? One of the best things about working at Penn is all the different food options both on and around campus, and I know that I have not been able to try them all yet. At this point, I would have to say that the new Frontera café in the Arch is my favorite. Their guacamole and shrimp bowls are really tasty and the staff is always friendly.
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To find more information on student groups and OSA services please visit our NEW website at:
http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osa/

Or follow us on:
http://www.facebook.com/UpennOsa
https://twitter.com/upennosa

OSA would like to thank all contributors to this issue of The Link. If you would like to submit an article or participate in an interview please email Amelia Carter at:
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Retta Stand Up, 2014
Mathew Perry Talk, 2014
Vince Gilligan Talk, 2014
Janelle Moné
Spring Fling, 2013
The Neighborhood Concert, 2014