

PhD Leadership Meeting Minutes August 15th, 2018

Attendance: Josh Acklin, Jim Duehr, Jesse Gelles, Basil Hans, Maggie Hung, Denise Jurczynszak, Shikha Nayar, Matthew O'Connell, Nick Upright.

Meeting start time: 4:05pm

PLM Business

1. Proposed changes to Operating Procedures wrt Dean numbers in attendance to:
 - a. 2.2 Quorum
 - i. Quorum was changed to require 2/2 Deans to be in attendance for the meeting to proceed.
 - b. 3.1 Faculty Representation
 - i. Removed Associate Dean for Programmatic Development.
 - c. 8.4.4 Voting
 - i. 1/2 Deans and 2/3 students must be present to make a vote.
 - d. 9.2.3 Voting on Dissolution
 - i. All Deans must be in attendance.

Updates from the Deans

1. Basil Hanss, Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Career Development
 - a. General updates
 - THAW had a successful 2 hour event during orientation which illustrated mental health initiatives, peer mentorship and focal points to the students.
 - Evaluation forms were sent out to students who participated.
2. Matthew O'Connell, Senior Associate Dean for Curriculum, Recruitment and Admissions
 - a. Orientation updates
 - Matthew discussed the new requirement of biostatistics placement exam with the first year students. Based on results of the exam, students can choose which course to take based on the research.
 - If students take the 1 credit MPH course, they must take the Spring Module for "bench sciences" biostatistics.
 - Masters students wishing to go to Medical school: biostatistics will still be counted as "science" class.
 - Faculty "datablitz" + reception was well received during orientation.
 - New Graduate School office complete on the 5th floor of Annenberg.

Steering Committee- *Jim Duehr*

1. Revamping Thesis Committee form
 - a. This will now be digitized. Form will be vastly reduced in size, and several requirements removed with students sending these ahead of time to their committees.

- b. Timeline for roll out not solidified yet. This will be done through Formstack.
 - c. Discussion on feedback from committee meeting. Should this be written by the faculty? Student to write up a summary of the meeting and submit to committee chair? → Jim to bring up at next Steering Committee meeting.
- 2. PhD student retention and official tracking
 - a. The Graduate School will formally start to track students who leave Sinai and/or those who switch labs.
 - b. There is an ongoing conversation as to how to implicate this (IT infrastructure).
- 3. Writing and Critical thinking classes
 - a. MTA co-directors did not want this to be mandatory within departments and core curriculum.
 - b. There are new courses pertaining to scientific writing and communication that are available for students to take as electives.

Curriculum Committee- Elizabeth Slocum

- 1. General updates
 - a. No students present at the last Curriculum Committee meeting. Matthew O'Connell to update: new course discussed re: high level quantitative analysis of neuroscience datasets. Discussed 7/8 course evaluations.
 - b. New student memberships to Curriculum Committee being solicited by Matthew.

Student Affairs- Jesse Gelles, Allison Kann

- 1. General updates
 - a. Committee has compiled a working list of ideas (long and short term goals). These include:
 - i. Dealing with international student affairs.
 - ii. Dealing with fellowships/writing as a larger initiative within the Graduate School—there is a new approved Fellowship course in Fall 2018 that students can take (spearheaded by Carla Golden and Jesse Gelles).
 - iii. Dealing with Career Services—working with Ellie and managing events like GSCS dinners and networking reception at Sinai innovations.

Student Council- Josh Acklin, Nick Upright

- 1. Aron Hall Housing updates
 - a. Student Council PhD representatives and Student Council Steering Committee have reached out to Phyllis Schnepf with students' concerns regarding new paint policy in Aron Hall. Phyllis will be in touch with housing and return feedback.
 - b. Student Council PhD representatives and Housing Committee to remind students of the new back door Aron alarm policy.
- 2. Starting the new academic year
 - a. First Student Council Steering meeting September 18th, GBM September 19th, elections for PhD first years will also be held in September.
 - b. Graduate School social with MSBS, PhD, Genetic Counseling programs on August 22nd at 6pm Two Door Tavern.

3. Website
 - a. New PhD Student Council Representatives website is working well. 10/12 feedback responses came directly from the website.

THAW- *Maggie Hung, Denise Jurczynszak*

1. New mentorship structure
 - a. PhD student—Postdoc connection
 - i. New membership interest/recruitment has been solicited from the student body.
 - ii. PhD mentorship groups now include post-docs in each group.
 - b. September social
 - i. The first “come chill with THAW” event will occur early September. Denise to follow-up.
 - ii. Mentor-mentee mixer will be later in the Fall semester.

Feedback from the student body

1. Stipend roll out for first year students
 - a. It takes ~2 weeks for the stipend to be rolled out for new students via payroll.
2. Centralized list of PI’s looking for new students
 - a. Discussed a potential centralized list to provide this. Student Affairs to compile this in the long term. Matthew to ask MTA directors for current list and email to first year students in the short term.
3. Writing and Presentation courses
 - a. This is currently a priority for the Graduate School and is being discussed among Steering Committee and Student Affairs. Updates will be relayed to the student body.
4. Alumni addresses for graduating students
 - a. Alumni addresses for graduating students exist. Currently do not know if the domain retains prior google drive information. ASCIT to update.
5. Invitees and honorees in September Lab coat ceremony
 - a. Confusion lay in who would be getting recognized and why? Graduate School response: incoming first years will be recognized with a personalized lab coat, and successful thesis proposal candidates from the academic year of 2017-2018 will be receiving a plaque.
 - b. This ceremony will take place on September 17th.
6. Students wish to receive subsidized metro card
 - a. Subsidized metro cards are not something that can be supported or pursued by the leadership at this time.

Meeting adjourned: 5:00

Next meeting: September 12th, 4pm