

PhD Leadership Meeting Minutes
November 14th, 2019

Attendance: Josh Acklin, Guha Arunkumar, Sindhura Gopinath, Basil Hanss, Maggie Hung, Denise Jurczynszak, Abigail Lubin, Bar Nachmani, Shikha Nayar, Chris Panebianco

Start time: 16:05

PLM Business *none*

Updates from the Deans ~10 mins

1. Basil Hanss, Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Career Development
 - a. General updates
 - i. On-going efforts to re-invigorate THAW and Student Affairs.
 - ii. PEERS curriculum started! First skills session is next week.
 - iii. Wellness awareness month in October → effort vs. impact. Advertisement to be more targeted and widespread next time. Campaign to go on the rest of the year.
2. Matthew O'Connell, Senior Associate Dean for Curriculum, Recruitment and Admissions
 - a. Admissions updates: input from students for interviews
 - i. Email Matthew offline to help with social events and other help with interview preparation.

Steering Committee- *Bar Nachmani, 10 mins*

1. Advisory committee voting members handbook language made more specific
 - a. Many people end up collaborating/are a part of the project and so committee meetings tend to be huge. To clarify in handbook: chair of the committee is not allowed to collaborate, rest of the voting members can be in some part of the project (including publication).
 - b. PI is still a non-voting member.
2. Creating a Parents Community - meeting organized by THAW on November 12th
 - a. In collaboration with Mariana (postdoc from THAW), establishing a parent community → raising concerns/problems/solutions.
 - b. Social worker was at the first meeting with parent community; went successfully.
3. Discussion on non-PI personnel mentoring PhD student
 - a. Sometimes with big labs/busy PI, other members of the lab become proxy mentors without actually wanting to.
 - b. Do PhD students feel comfortable going to PI with issues? Students should feel like taking measures that they are comfortable with (Student Affairs, ombudsperson, formal mistreatment, Deans, MTA directors, THAW) → increase awareness of these channels and their uses.

Curriculum Committee- *Abigail Lubin, Guha Arunkumar, 5 mins*

1. General updates: course evaluations (RCR and BMS for MSTP)
 - a. Positive approval on RCR (>70%).
 - b. BMS: TA sessions; students would like more neuroscience-based core classes.

- c. No new course proposals; last month there was a course proposed for process of biomedical devices vs. drugs.

Student Affairs- *Sindhura Gopinath, Allison Kann, 5-10 mins*

1. International student resources
 - a. Announcement that tax prep software is now partnering with the Graduate School→ this is available for all international students and post docs.
 - b. Student Affairs met with the international office personnel to solidify guide for people who move to NYC from overseas also encouraged to be present more→ initiation of office hours.
2. Diversity and inclusion
 - a. Chris and Roxy from neuroscience to promote community of 1st gen students and overall diversity in grad school→ collaborating and working closely with Angel Pallermo and the Medical School too.
3. Structuring the student portal
 - a. Milestones for MTAs: PLM members to test run student portal and give feedback to Sindhura.

Student Council- *Josh Acklin, Chris Panebianco, 10 mins*

1. Board of Trustees meeting: presentation of comprehensive survey results
 - a. Aggregated: working on splitting this data and giving it to relevant departments by topic; will also be breaking down important sections by Graduate School program and discussing with Marta and Eric.
 - b. Mental health and wellbeing data to THAW.
2. Standardizing MTA best practices
 - a. In collaboration with Student Affairs: sit with MTA directors and students separately→ what helps the MTA function? Identify differences and come up with guidelines→ potentially propose to steering committee.
 - b. PLM members to send ideas/topics to include in discussion with MTA directors to Josh.
3. Town Hall with Dean Charney
 - a. Town hall with Dean Charney at a future GBM: questions will be asked in advance to create topics to guide the Town Hall beforehand.
4. Grad/Med relations
 - a. Discussion: at the end of the next Dean's cup, there will be a field day where mixed teams of Grad/MD students will work together in teams→ raise awareness to all members of the community; institutional funding from all sides will be provided.
5. Sushi party
 - a. 21st November, Thursday 6pm.

THAW- *Maggie Hung, Denise Jurczynszak, 10 mins*

1. THAW structure moving forward
 - a. Planned to downsize social events; focusing on PEERS, peer mentorship, reabsorbing post docs to help with mission.

- b. New members recruited to help with efforts on leadership.
2. Town hall event in January
 - a. What do people want THAW to do? Town hall will involve Student Affairs→ this will be a wellness-focused student led Town Hall (breakout groups etc.)
3. Moving forward with STMH in Aron Hall
 - a. Read statement FAQ sent by Maggie→ this will be sent to students soon.
 - b. Plan is to disarm buzz from back door of Aron for STMH—controlled by STMH
 - c. New Housing office hours have started, so that students can approach the Housing office directly.
4. TED talk series on well being
 - a. Discussions around this are taking place→ more to come re: organization etc.

Feedback from the student body 5-10 mins

1. Aron Hall key fob→ stair case
 - Some students who are unable to use the elevators on Saturdays end up standing outside of the staircase for a while, to be let in. Security could help someone who is standing outside, for the time-being.
 - Sabbath elevator?
2. PhD Milestones
 - Working with student affairs on this→ student portal.
3. Grant writing course
 - Currently have to have passed thesis proposal exam: students would like to take this course earlier if they are submitting fellowships earlier.
 - This topic will be added to agenda on Curriculum committee meeting.
4. Grad/Med relations
 - More PhD specific events wanted by students→ PhD representatives working on providing Grad-specific events within confines of the budget!

Meeting adjourned: 17:01

Next meeting: December 12th 4pm