

PhD Leadership Meeting September 30th, 2022

Deans' Updates (10 minutes)

Sr. Assoc. Dean for Graduate School Administration *Brad Gano*

- Major project: Annual budget is in the process of being submitted
- New Program Manager for PhD Programs, Cris Rosario—email went out to students
- Change in authentication for student logins: Two-factor authentication will be required for G-suite log-ins off-campus
 - If this is disruptive to students, this can be brought up to IT

Sr. Assoc. Dean for Student Affairs and Career Development *Basil Hanss*

- Embracing we are in the post-pandemic era: Get back into the routine of hosting Student Affairs events from the Office and SAC
- October 18th: Lunch and Workshop series event on work-life balance
 - Asking Laura Huckins to come back and collaborate with Acanthus Farley to run this event

Director of Postdoctoral and Student Affairs *Matt Cipriano*

- IP updates:
 - Food is permissible
 - Groups over 50 need be masked
 - Off campus visitors require proof of vaccination

Sr. Assoc. Dean for PhD Programs *Matthew O'Connell*

- SINAI4US is in two weeks
 - Panel on Student Life is coming up, calling for students who are interested in being on the panel
- We have ~400 PhD applications for the next round of admissions
- In-person attendance for classes is good, most students are wearing masks despite it being optional
- Curriculum Committee: November meeting, hopefully will have new members
 - Anina is helping recruit and manage members
 - Asked for four representatives, 3rd year or above (PhD or MD/PhD in their PhD years)

Student Council *Alexandra Magee, Anina Lund (5 minutes)*

- MSTP student volunteered to join PLM
- Communication project update from Steering

THAW *Bryce Rowan, Mackenzie Herb (5 minutes)*

- What do other student groups want to see THAW collaborate with them on?
 - DEIA retreat went well
 - Disabilities student groups: Try to do a panel discussion with them and which groups to collaborate with
 - Possible collaboration with DREAMS, DMSA, SAMSA, AAPI as a panel discussion
 - Bryce will follow up on which groups
- **PEERS** *Mackenzie Herb (5 minutes)*
 - First sessions went really well

- Bump PEERS survey in PLM newsletter
 - Survey will provide data on student perspectives on resilience

URISM Qixiu Fu, Kristie Oluyemi (15 minutes)

- Finance and payroll (Qixiu)
 - Reimbursement issues, not responsive leading to expired reimbursement period deadline
 - There are deadlines for reimbursement where the reimbursements will be denied if they miss it
 - Timing of reimbursement is slow even when it is approved
 - Students are required to submit a travel request prior to traveling, and this speeds up the reimbursement timeline → Departments will be tightening up on this rule
 - Cohort-wise direct deposit issues
 - Sometimes the check pick-up timing is inconsistent
 - Something within the Sinai system is preventing direct deposits from being completed
 - Anyone who transitioned to a student from another role almost certainly has encountered this issue → IT is actively working on this issue on a case-by-case basis
 - Students who are still having issues can contact the Graduate School and their ticket can be bumped with IT
 - Neuro MTA moving stipend update (01/22 ~ 09/22 initiative to implementation)
 - Moving stipend was implemented by the Department of Neuroscience for the NEU first years and current second years
 - We need to advocate for all PhD students to be given a moving/relocation stipend every year → The Graduate School (inc. Brad and Marta) is actively advocating for this but we will not know until later this year whether this is approved in the budget
 - New students are unable to receive funds prior to the semester starting, so they wouldn't get the funds until the first paycheck
 - Incoming students ought to be reminded up front about the timing of their first paychecks, when rent will be due, and potential fees they may experience
 - Timing of the first paycheck has been a recurring issue → transparent communication with incoming students may be helpful so that students know what they can expect
 - Potentially adjust housing rent due dates and accounting for hardship events
 - A financial education workshop for incoming students might be helpful
- Diversity and inclusion (Kristie)
 - Inclusive accessibility to Monkeypox vaccination for non-binary females
 - Screening criteria is not inclusive for non-binary females, it was very gender-specific → Brad Gano can chat with the communications departments
 - DiverseBrains Special Event "You Said What??" content discussion: October 28, 4 PM, Hess Seminar Room B
 - General feedback is negative towards this event
 - Repercussions?
 - Coordinate a discussion offline and then talk to Basil and Matt

- Attended the DEI retreat training, potential event planning with URiSM Student Council representatives
 - Kristie and Qixiu will meet regularly with Adriana Mendez to coordinate collaborations
- International admin staff not being responsive
 - Upcoming International Personnel town hall → Add to newsletter?
 - Basil will push the announcement
 - Ally will send email from Student Council
 - Office recently had some staff turnover (Nadia left), so there may be some chaos → New person is now in place
 - Communication from the IPO needs to be more consistent and reach all students

Graduate Steering Committee *No representatives*

- No business

Student Affairs *Pushkala Jayaraman (5 minutes)*

- *Absent*
- International students and their trouble with getting an SSN (seems to be a change in rules or interpretation of the rules from last year?)
 - Students are not required to have an SSN to be a student at Sinai
- Saw increased student interest at the Student Activities Fair
 - Working on planning an event for students to get to know the Student Affairs Office

Feedback Form Discussion *Alexandra Magee, Anina Lund (15 minutes)*

- International student issues
 - SSNs are required for making payments to Sinai and receiving stipends
 - Students are being told that they are not eligible for SSNs, which is false
 - Hamel Vayas is the key authority on understanding SSNs and stipends
 - Vacation policies for international students: Student handbook may have language that accounts for “permission of the preceptor” → Matthew, Basil, and Brad can mediate these conversations when necessary
- Student stipend
 - 22 of 30 PheeDback responses were asking for an increase in the stipend to keep up with inflation
 - New stipend rate will be announced in January, there will be an increase, but the budget has not been approved yet → there is advocacy for an increase that will be competitive with comparable institutions
 - Contact information for various finance offices → See first-year survival guide - If students have issues getting timely responses after contacting the relevant office (e.g. Payroll), they can loop the Graduate School into the conversation for assistance with expediting response
 - Osei Tutu and Brad Gano can help with missing paycheck issues because they can see the records → They can expedite the issue with the payroll office
- Housing
 - Housing concerns are being handed off to the StuCo Housing Committee
 - Early payments to the housing office were problematic because they aren’t registered in the system and the housing office sends emails threatening legal action
 - Sinai has an emergency fund for severe financial hardships that aren’t for Mount Sinai rent or medical bill (up to \$2500 in one request)

- Student groups & mailing lists
 - Ecclesia: Perhaps they should get their own list
- Student event seen as insensitive
 - Addressed in the URiSM section
- Spending cards/p cards for student organizations
 - Reimbursements are too slow for the financial situations for students fronting the funds
 - Cards to access Student Council funds → in the past, these have been abused
 - Push this via Student Council
- Lab/MTA issues
 - Enforce 20 hrs/week during rotations: Rotation agreements that said >20 hrs were emailed to make sure they rectify it
 - First years receive a monthly check-in email and there are efforts to assess the student body satisfaction
 - Push new website for the students in the PLM Newsletter
 - Push 1st year Survival Guide in the Newsletter
 - MTAs should have happy hours (MIC)
 - Matthew should send out a clarification email to first year students to address rotation concerns?
- DEI initiatives from 2 years ago
 - Brad has some updates that he can share with us that we can include in the newsletter or in another channel

PLM Discussion *Sally Claridge, Carisse Lansiquot (10 minutes)*

- Feedback on September Newsletter
 - Perhaps we can change the language around the PheeDback form to encourage both critiques AND kudos
- Suggestions for formatting PheeDback in the PLM newsletter
- Vote on three changes to the bylaws:
 - Adding an MSTP (Y3-6) representative to PLM and the additional language added to the by-laws → 9 yea (including 2 deans), 0 nay
 - Reorganizing bylaws into a Word document → 9 yea (including 2 deans), 0 nay
 - Adding new 2022-2023 voting members to the bottom of the bylaws → 9 yea (including 2 deans), 0 nay

Wrap-up *Sally Claridge (5 minutes)*