

PhD Town Hall  
February 12th, 2019

1. **Graduate School Staff** [Randi]

- a. *All offices in Annenberg 5-206*
- b. Randi - presides over administrative functions for all of grad school programs
- c. Osei - all things financial (stipend, travel, grant reimbursement)
- d. Theresa & Frank - all post doc operations
- e. Rewtie - PhD and MSBS program manager; point persons for PhD milestones, etc.
- f. Bianca - same as Rewtie but MD/PhD
- g. Arjana - PhD and MD/PhD program coordinator (and SURP and PREP)
- h. Carol - Admin; Lab rotation forms
- i. Ellie - Career advising; hosts networking events and will help you coordinate speaker panels for yours, etc.; you can email her for a 1:1 appointment
- j. Roland - recruiting for ALL programs; if any students are interested in attending recruitment fairs, feel free to reach out
- k. Courtney - marketing
- l. Sophie - supervisor for technology; not here for your tech issues, but helps with streamlining processes, eLearning, software education, technology lending, etc.
- m. *See chart from presentation to see all contact info/specific roles.*

2. **Marketing** [Courtney]

- a. Opportunities for students:
  - i. Create student spotlights to highlight recent accomplishments - if you have interesting news/attend cool conferences, etc., shoot Courtney a message and grad school will publish your content
  - ii. If student groups want to publish anything, email Courtney and she will put together a slide
  - iii. Will also help with content creation for student groups
  - iv. Submit for internal newsletters
- b. Just email Courtney if you have an idea, or need help. Additionally, we have loads of social media and all PhD students should follow it.
- c. Q: *What is the purpose of student profiles and PlumX?*
  - i. PlumX organizes their research
  - ii. Student profiles will look like Faculty profiles
    1. Fill out through sinai central and admin will put them on the public Sinai website
    2. IF YOU DON'T MAKE A PROFILE IT WILL BE EMPTY AND EMBARRASSING.
- d. Q: *Can you include instructions on the student profile emails?*
  - i. Yes - Courtney will look into it before she sends out another communication.
- e. Q: *Will this now be a part of orientation?*

- i. Sure, we can look on
- 3. **Grad School Leadership Structure** [Shika & other reps]
  - a. See chart from powerpoint presentation.
  - b. Web commons: you can see initiatives, and the PheeDback Phorm will always be live there.
    - i. There is access to Resources on Web commons: work on Aron Hall policies and list of PIs currently seeking rotation students
- 4. **New stipend and tax brackets**
  - a. You only pay the increased rate on the ~\$1000 more a year we are making
  - b. *Q: On the Sinai website, why does it say \$36.5k instead of \$37k for our 2018 stipend?*
    - i. Probably because we got a pay raise mid-year.
- 5. **Housing (Aron Hall)** [Josh & other reps]
  - a. Most eminent issues: paint, furniture, check-in and transparency
  - b. Check-in
    - i. Racial profiling
  - c. Transparency
  - d. This will all be shared as it is analyzed, and presented at GBM shortly
  - e. *Q: Another concern - maintenance walking into apt?*
    - i. Policy is not adhered to
    - ii. Policy is 48h notice and another w/i 24h; Fire, smoke, \_\_\_\_\_ - they can enter
  - f. Issue: Locked Doors
    - i. Brought up by Basil
    - ii. People need to start locking their doors
    - iii. *Q: Thoughts? (from Josh)*
      - 1. Give us more than 1 apt key.
      - 2. A lot of the keys that are dispersed are the wrong keys.
      - 3. Some apt doors physically cannot be locked.
      - 4. They should tell us when people are being robbed; this should be reported to students; this could change the culture.
- 6. **Phun PhriDay** next Thursday 2/22!!!!
- 7. **Q&A**
  - a. *Can we hire more minority STMH employees?*
    - i. We do have one as of a few weeks ago.
  - b. *Resources for students in financial need?*
    - i. Osei is the contact person for finances.
    - ii. Basil would be the contact person for crisis.
  - c. *NYAS membership beyond Year 1?*
    - i. We only have membership for Year 1. Your PI should sponsor you after that.
    - ii. *Would it be useful for us to get this later in our PhD?*

1. Maybe; maybe we could choose when we wanted our membership?
- iii. *Do most PIs actually sponsor their PhD students?*
  1. We don't think most PhD students ask them to.
- iv. *What even is this membership?*
  1. Career events, networking, seminar series
- d. *Mandatory writing course?*
  - i. Not mandatory, but we do have one that you can take.
  - ii. Issues about whether a writing course should be MTA specific. Writing is v different btwn different MTAs.
  - iii. If we feel passionately, fill out feedback forms, and answer the emails from the curriculum committee. They will have to bring it up if everyone starts emailing them about writing courses.
  - iv. Note of Levy Library courses and there is a Fellowship writing course you can take as of last year.
- e. *Science and communication course?*
  - i. We do have one rolling out.
- f. *GDS-specific courses?*
  - i. There are conversations going on right now about potential MTA restructuring. There isn't a plan to formally institute a new curriculum, but to provide supplementary programs. Final decisions are TBD.
  - ii. Neuro does have a new data analysis course starting in Spring II.
  - iii. *Comment: there are probably only a handful of people qualified to teach this class. Can we look for NYU/Columbia/Stony Brook collaboration?*
    1. *Can we push for subsidies for online tech bootcamp?*
- g. Eric Nestler & Marta want to equalize how the MTAs operate. We keep getting MTA-specific questions, and there is an effort in place to standardize.
- h. *Why isn't Marta more involved?*
  - i. Marta did want to be here, she is away this week. We don't think she has heard this type of feedback before.
  - ii. If you have specific questions, there are other people (i.e. Matthew) that are more constantly available.
  - iii. Marta will be at future town halls.
  - iv. *Comment: increased visibility and communication would be useful. For student leadership members, we have a lot of access to assc deans, but seem to get stalled making actual change because can't communicate/get a meeting with Marta. Comment: This stuff has gotten shuttled to someone else in the past. There should not be this onus on students to have to try so hard to enact change.*
- i. *Affordable childcare?*
  - i. Long-term: building a new building that will have childcare for trainees.
  - ii. Short-term:

1. Grassroots parenting childcare group starting up. First meeting on Thursday for those interested.
  2. There are MTA-specific initiatives for this that you can look into.
  3. There is a Sinai daycare that is full.
  4. *Is there a way for Sinai to provide subsidies for childcare?*
    - a. We can ask Eric.
- j. *Admissions process - ensuring that MTAs have more equal numbers of acceptances?*
- i. Our admissions program is very interdisciplinary. Students can move around once they get here.
  - ii. Basically, the admissions process isn't MTA-specific.
  - iii. Marta makes all the final calls.
  - iv. Students, PIs, and Deans all have a big convo together
  - v. *Comment: But this is MTA specific because of the rigor of different programs/how many applicants each MTA gets. Smaller MTAs are automatically put at a disadvantage. Push for improving metrics from Marta -- current students are getting dismissed in order to recruit new students.*
    1. We need to talk about this to Marta. Part of a larger conversation.
    2. We will show Marta this.
- k. *Comment: General feel is that Aron Hall is changing more and more into a dorm -- becoming less and less desirable to be there as an older PhD student. We are being treated like we are way younger than we are.*
- i. We are taking this all to the next steering committee
  - ii. Issue: Aron is owned by Sinai but managed by Rose Assc.
  - iii. *Does Rose Assc actually make these policies?*
    1. Yes.
  - iv. *Do they manage other dorms?*
    1. Unsure.
  - v. *Can we hire a diff building management company?*
    1. Hopefully.
  - vi. The Deans are aware that these are issues, but won't do anything without data. Now we have it. Hope is that this will make it an actionable issue.
  - vii. *Why is this only now an issue?*
    1. Policies happen as issues happen. And Rose doesn't have the manpower to deal with them.
- l. *Movement on getting doormen unionized?*
- i. James Blum might have an update on that. We can find out.
- m. *What does the subcommittee on housing do?*
- i. This committee is usually made up of Year 1/2 MD students without historical knowledge.
- n. *Also note: All of these channels of communication is new. We don't have institutional historical feedback.*

- o. *Cynthia is hostile and not helpful. How do we fix this?*
  - i. Responses to housing re:cynthia were very divisive. Cynthia is actually a liaison between Sinai and Rose, she is technically a Sinai employee. Apparently there is a large lack of communication.
  - ii. Comment: *We need more transparency.*
  - iii. Comment: *Cynthia emailed us the incorrect move-in date. And we literally moved in on the wrong date.*
  - iv. *[more anecdotes about poor management of Aron]*
- p. Issue [Josh]: email fatigue
  - i. *Can we get fewer med student emails? And emails about hospital tech stuff that we never use?*
    - 1. Gmail filters [band-aid solution]
      - a. *Sometimes this doesn't work and deletes actual emails.*
    - 2. *Can we talk to med school administration?*
      - a. *A lot of it is confused med students without the discretion.*
  - ii. *Trainee email list?*
    - 1. *It was a mistake. It has been handled.*
  - iii. *Basil has thought about whether an app would be more useful for school updates. Thoughts?*
    - 1. *Eh.*
  - iv. We should bring this all up to Sophie Miller (grad school office).
  - v. *Issues about white-listed emails, etc and frequency of listserv modulation.*
  - vi. *What is the ideal way of communication?*
    - 1. *Depends on what it is. Email is probably the best, we just need to fix it.*
    - 2. *What if anything actually important gets sent through a specific email address.*
- q. Comment: *Why are students always in charge of these initiatives? As an upper year PhD, I want to tell them there is an issue but I don't want to build it from the ground up. I don't have the time.*
- r. Comment: *This feels like an echo chamber. There are no Deans here and we are all in the same boat, and progress still feels extremely elusive. They need to be here and here us. Will anything be done after this meeting?*
- s. *Insurance policy update? Has there been any progress?*
  - i. *Merging employee and student pool? It's a NY state law. We will ask leadership.*
- t. Comment: *Yang is not on the PhD student listserv.*
- u. Note: *do your title IX training !!!!*