

GSA Meeting Agenda

• NOVEMBER 12 2020 •

WELCOME

- Attendance

DEPARTMENT Q&A (DR. JOE HEFNER)

- Department Communication
 - Department has decided to take new students, which depends on the applications and faculty who want to take on students
 - Department is also using it as opportunity to diversify the student body
 - Guided via the DEI
 - Department is not considering GRE and Dr. Hefner is hoping to they get rid of it completely
 - DEI Committee
 - Four tasks forces – one based on syllabi
 - Looking at things down to the amount of textbooks and the prices of the books
 - Faculty is not unionized
 - So faculty pay has been cut as a consequence of COVID
 - Did not happen to staff and grad students who are unionized
 - Faculty are also dealing with other issues, such as loss of child care, etc.
 - Faculty are in a different position than students in some ways as they don't have to worry about publications or comps or defenses
 - Dr. Morgan is the grad student advocate
 - She is constantly concerned that we have everything we need and that we are taken care of
 - She has open office hours for students
 - She has the department chair's ear – she can pass on information to the department chair
 - But will also keep information private if you so wish
 - Work-Life came to talk to the faculty meeting
 - They gave good coping strategies and Dr. Hefner recommends their advice
 - Dr. Hefner is happy to pass on anything we need to Dr. Morgan
 - When grad students get information, it is often times the same information that faculty is getting for the first time (president emails, etc.)
 - Before Dr. Hefner got here, not all grad students were given funding
 - Students submitted reviews each year and were given positions based on student ranking
 - Now, you are guaranteed four years of funding and after that point, it is expected that you find outside sources of funding
 - Dr. Hefner is always available by email if anyone has any further questions or needs advice, etc.
 - Dr. Hefner wants to emphasize that Dr. Morgan and Dr. Fenton are fighting on behalf of the students constantly
- Open Q&A

- Is the university expecting the same level of publications, students, research, etc. from departments?
 - Expectations are being revisited right and the university is coming up with a new metric scheme
 - SIR forms will be used for class management rather than teacher reviews this semester
 - Expectations are usually for merit based raises, but there are no raises right now after the pay cut
 - Dr. Hefner does not believe that the university can expect faculty and staff and students to live up to pre-COVID expectations
 - Number of incoming students is always a department decision
 - But the department gets ranking points based on our grad students (their post graduation placements, etc.)
 - Taking or not taking students affects the department's ability to place students
 - Some faculty need to focus on their current students (some who just took students do not need to take on students for another few years)
 - But some faculty members have been recruiting or are in line to accept a new student
 - We also need to take into account the thoughts of students who are applying, as this is likely the hardest application year
 - Department felt that because grad students are such an integral part of the department, it made sense to take in new students even in the pandemic
- It would be helpful if the department could send out an email when positions are offered so that students who didn't get funding are aware and not left in the dark about whether or not they got funding
 - Dr. Hefner (not speaking on half of the department) will pass on this information and suspects that the delay may have been due to the signing process of letters
 - If letters aren't signed, that position can be reallocated – which could potentially account for the delay in some students not finding out about finding
 - Process – department is given budget info, incoming students are tallied, current students are tallied, both of these students have to accept their position, grants that are available have to be cleared to accept an RA
 - Further comment: maybe even just an email on the sign by date so that students are aware that positions have been assigned
 - “Funding offers have got out. If you received one, please be sure to sign and return it as soon as possible” – something like that so students know
- How do students above their fourth year get funded?
 - The department figures out how many positions they have to fill
 - If someone is in the field, they are usually not able to take one
 - It's a situation by situation basis
 - It takes into account each student by cohort
 - GCPC often looks at the annual reviews of each student or their position in the program

- Department chair makes final decisions, but other committees help guide those decisions
 - There is no straightforward way that students are given positions
- What then is the point of the appendix II?
 - It makes sure that students are staying on task
 - That faculty are not pushing their students too hard (they published, but are failing classes, etc.)
 - Therefore, it protects students
 - Also, to make sure that grad students are getting advice from their advisors (that they actually meet with them, etc.)
 - Are students doing what they need to do in order to get a position post graduation
 - Also tells the department what you as a student are doing
 - Are you being let down by your chair/committee or are you not keeping up with expectations? Etc.
 - In the past, it was used to rank students for funding
- Are there changes being made for expectations of students for this past year?
 - Yea – it is understood that expectations needs to be lower (college for faculty and faculty for students)
 - Appendix II is never used to punish a student (if they don't have any points)
- How has the new block system affected graduate funding? Is the block tuition being re-evaluated based on the pandemic? Is the block tuition here to stay?
 - Block tuitions lets students take as many class as they want during the semester and it is now more expensive for students to take summer courses
 - Before – summer courses made a lot of money for grad students in the department
 - It is still up in the air as to whether it affected the department
 - What is clear is that the department took a big hit from COVID
 - A lot of the professors who teach online courses already are doing everything they can to make sure that we keep those online courses
 - We're also not the only department who gets money from online courses
 - Because grad students define R1 institutions, if we lose grad students, we could lose R1 status
 - The school needs us for research and so can't lose us
 - Dr. Hefner is not sure what will happen with tuition, but has a gut feeling that it may be reversed – once it is evaluated whether or not it helped or hurt the university
- Will there be any flexibility in the amount of max 999 credits?
 - Likely yes – but may be a case by case basis
 - This also may be affected by the new dean, as we only have an interim dean at the moment
- What comments are we supposed to get back from the annual review?
 - Need to check the grad handbook, but can then try to clarify if students should get something more – or what we should get period

DEPARTMENT & RELATED EVENTS (MICAYLA SPIROS)

- GCPC Dates were emailed again on 11/9
- Session— Taking Care of Ourselves and Our Teams in Times of Uncertainty Third Point

- Work-Life office seminar
- We are thinking about doing a similar session for graduate students
 - Faculty got a lot out of their session
- Inclusivity Task Force – for Anthropology Department (all faculty members have been assigned to a task force)
 - They are continuing to work with their specific task forces
 - Task force 1 – syllabus recommendation audit
 - Task force 2 – edited that syllabus recommendation
 - Task force 3 – grad student workshop on power dynamics within research, within staff and students, within research and collaborators, within researchers and NGOs
 - Not made yet, but they are working on it
 - Not sure if this will be the RCR talk
 - Task force 4 – focus on diversifying our grad students
 - Will recruit at specific conferences or institutions
 - Also rechecking the DEI letter they sent out to make sure it is up to par
 - Question: have they reached out to other departments that have done research on DEI in higher education?
 - Not sure, but if you would like to be involved or have any questions, you can reach out to Dr. Morgan
 - We will likely see these changes next semester
- SIS transfer
 - Grad plan is transferring
 - Needs to say official on the top of your grad plan or you will have to refill it out in January
 - More details in the email from Dr. Morgan
- Second call for DCF
 - If you are completing in spring of 2021 or summer 2021, you can apply
 - There will be a separate call for fall 2021
 - December 10th deadline
- Emergency Department Money
 - The department has saved money for students who may need funds for lost security deposits, etc.
 - All outlined in the email from Dr. Morgan
 - There is also a college emergency fund, but that can only be used once so Dr. Morgan recommends going through us first
- Dr. Morgan's Weekly Office Hours
 - Wednesday 10am-12pm
 - You can bring any issues to her during these hours

COGS UPDATE (RHIAN DUNN)

- Mandatory COVID-19 Testing Update
 - Concerns about mandatory covid testing has been passed on to COGs and is being discussed with administration

TREASURY UPDATE (ELENA WATSON)

- Current Amount - \$560
- MSU Work life Office

- We want to see if anyone would come meet with the grad students in our department
- Potentially at the beginning of next semester
- If you are interested in having this space to discuss anything or to ask questions, look forward to this

GEU UPDATE (JEFF BURNETT)

- Post-election General Members Meeting
 - Their last meeting didn't really have a chance to discuss much
 - Preparing to work with housing issues, those off campus, and what spring will look like if cases stay high or get worse
 - Feel free to reach out to Jeff and he can bring it up at the next meeting

GSA ACTIVITIES UPDATE (EMILY MILTON)

- GSA ThredUp Donation Pick Up
 - We have only had two sign ups so far
 - We are not sure that Plato's Closet would be a better option
- Symposium Update
 - We are willing to host a platform for talks
 - Or we have alternatively discussed submitting something more art related or a podcast or anything you would like
 - We could create a platform for those to submit work with an option to get feedback
 - We are still looking for a committee so that others can help us figure out how to restructure it
 - We may send out a survey on what others would be interested in
 - 5 minute talks or submitted recorded talks or art or anything else anyone prefers
- Mental Health Check-In
 - Is everyone doing ok this semester? Is there anything the GSA can do to help liaison for the department or act as a sounding board?

OPEN FLOOR

- Any questions, comments, concerns?
- Can we count any of our online webinars for RCR?
 - This has not yet been discussed, but often times these decisions are made on a case by case basis
 - So reach out to Dr. Morgan and she may be able to help guide you through the process
- Funding
 - Dr. Morgan has a list of potential funding sources outside of the department
 - She recommends that students reach out to her independently so she can help them
- Are we still required to do the same amount of RCR?
 - We are not sure yet, but the faculty will give a talk in spring – and it may be revisited in the spring as well
 - Some online courses count, talking with your advisor counts for an hour
- End of semester BBQ – will send out a survey with dates to set it up

ADJOURN