

February 2007 Minutes

GESA General Meeting Minutes

Date: February 7, 2007

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Dawson's Row

Attendance: 17

I. Welcome

II. Departmental news

- A. We have been quietly but diligently working on the issue of graduate funding.
- B. After the external review arrived in the fall, we formulated a response to the Deans, asking for more funding.
- C. Improvements in the funding situation
  - 1. GSAS-wide increase in Presidents' and Jefferson Fellowships
  - 2. The steering committee decided to shrink the size of the incoming PhD class and redistribute the fellowship budget. This change will put us in a much more competitive range.
  - 3. Additionally, there will be a GTA wage increase, which will likely take effect in the fall.

III. GSAS report

- A. There will be a happy hour at Jaberwocke near the end of February; an email with more information is to come.
- B. On February 24, there will be a Mardi Gras-themed wine tasting festival, with a free bus to the festival location. The wine tasting itself will cost \$15.00.
- C. On March 16, there will be a St. Patrick's Day party at Satellite Ballroom, an event in which many other schools are involved as well. Refreshments will be served. Again, more info to come.
- D. Yoga: The teacher of the advanced classes has noted that many people attend these sessions, but different people come each time, such that there is little opportunity to teach the more difficult moves which must be developed over time. Thus, the advanced class will be terminated, but the beginner's class will continue through March.

IV. Budget issues

A. Spring Book Fair

- 1. Last year's fair was incredibly successful in financial terms.
- 2. We have many more books to sell, and it will likely not be possible to hold all of these books until the fall, so we would prefer to have a sale in the spring.
- 3. We could hold the spring sale in Dawson's Row and advertise the fair to relevant UVA email lists.
- 4. Volunteers interested in organizing the book sale may email Ryan Cordell.
- 5. Suggestion: It would be a good idea to hold the book sale at a time that would coincide with the graduate conference. In this way, undergraduates as well as students from other universities who are attracted to the conference would also benefit from the opportunity to browse and buy books.

6. Ken Price has agreed to run the book sale over the graduate conference weekend.
- B. The Board has been considering several possibilities for appropriating GESA funds, which were in large part gathered through book sales of the past.
1. We would like to contribute funds to the graduate conference.
  2. It may be possible to provide a coffee machine and other necessary supplies (cups, spoons, etc.) for the graduate lounge, an option that would cost about \$50. The concern with providing coffee is that it could become a cleaning liability.
  3. GESA would like to sponsor an event during Visiting Weekend – perhaps a bar night, a house party, or a sponsored lunch; the activity would at any rate be an opportunity for current graduate students to get to know prospective students.
  4. We have considered using the funds to bring in another speaker, but this option is considerably more difficult than the others.
  5. Some have suggested that we might bring in an accountant to explain and clarify graduate tax filing. Emails in the past suggest there is much uncertainty about tax issues that could possibly be clarified by an expert, but other eng-grads do not desire more discussion of or involvement with tax issues.
  6. We have also considered holding a family-friendly event in the spring.
  7. Those with other ideas about appropriation of GESA funds should email the treasurer, Ryan Cordell. We would like the event made possible by the GESA surplus to be both visible and exciting.
- V. First-year series: The first-year panels have been very well-attended. The next panel will address Publications, and more information will be forthcoming.
- VI. MA Initiatives
- A. The committee has developed a list of teaching possibilities for MAs. They will meet with Susan Fraiman and then post the results on the website; the agreed-upon possibilities will also be distributed in orientation packets.
  - B. Insofar as it is possible, the MA committee would like to integrate these possibilities into the Department.
- VII. Graduate Conference
- A. Brent Edwards, the conference's keynote speaker, will be speaking on Jazz. It is possible (though not confirmed) that he may join the theory group on the Thursday prior to the conference.
  - B. The grad conference committee earnestly seeks abstracts. Several students from other universities have expressed interest in the conference, but we would also like to see a large number of UVA students participating.
  - C. Because the theme this year is "improvisation," the grad conference committee is willing to accommodate less conventional panels that are still scholarly in nature.
  - D. Themed panels are encouraged, but individual abstracts are of course most welcome as well.
  - E. The grad conference committee would like a monetary contribution from GESA. Because of the budget surplus, there is an expectation that GESA will contribute funds to the conference.
  - F. Faculty who oversee (Departmental) funds have been very generous in their commitments to support the conference financially.

- G. GSAS is limited in the amount and type of activities it can fund, and the grad conference committee has not been able to procure as many funds as desired from the GSAS Council.
- H. Suggestions for a Master Class should be sent to Steph Brown. Some possibilities for a master class leader are already being pursued, but nothing has been confirmed yet, and it is still possible to submit requests.

VIII. Area rep announcements

A. Medieval

- 1. On February 28, Emily Steiner will be lecturing on Langland.
- 2. The Medieval Colloquium continues to meet every other week.
- 3. The Latin reading group meets Tuesday at 2:30; for more information, email Ryan McDermott or Gabriel Haley.

B. Renaissance

- 1. This Sunday there will be a Renaissance/Early Modern Reading Group meeting, hosted by Ted Kaouk, as announced per email.
- 2. The area reps are considering holding a Renaissance Colloquium, which would mirror the Medieval Colloquium.
- 3. A discussion of Milton and religious violence, following upon the 2005 PMLA article, promises to be very interesting.

C. American

- 1. There will be a meeting at 7 p.m. on February 22 in the faculty lounge.
- 2. An email with further information is forthcoming.

D. Theory

- 1. At 7:30 Thursday the theory reading group will meet.
- 2. See emails for full details.

E. Modern

- 1. The contemporary poetry group continues to meet, and the next scheduled meeting is February 15.
- 2. They have a wiki site with updates.