

September 2006 Minutes

GESA General Meeting Minutes

Date: September 6, 2006

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Dawson's Row

Attendance: 33

- I. Welcome, introduction of GESA officers
 - A. Scott Selisker, President
 - B. Sarah Bishop, Vice President
 - C. Ryan Cordell, Treasurer
 - D. Amanda Sigler, Secretary
 - E. Ania Wieckowski and John Jackson, MA Representatives
- II. GESA's functions and objectives
 - A. GESA is a social and political organization that addresses the interests of English graduate students.
 - B. Our GESA predecessors have reorganized or otherwise influenced and improved the design of such courses and departmental procedures as: ENCR 801, the dissertation seminar, the pedagogy seminar, and the orals process.
 - C. When there was a lack of Victorian course offerings, GESA recruited Steve Arata to teach a course that would fulfill this need, resulting in this semester's Victorian course.
 - D. GESA creates task force committees to focus on various issues related to graduate students, such as class size, minority recruitment, and the MA program/teaching initiative.
 - E. Every year, GESA organizes social functions to enrich graduate life and to provide opportunities for colleagues to become better acquainted. The GESA Board organizes several parties and sponsors several drink nights for the general English graduate population, while area committees organize social events addressing the interests of their particular area.
 - F. GESA submits input when decisions are being made concerning new hires, new departmental chairs, and other changes and appointments in the Department.
 - G. Graduate students are encouraged to address any concerns or ideas to the GESA Board. The Board will be happy to place items which have been brought to its attention and which are of general concern to eng-grads on the GESA agenda. (Contact: President Scott Selisker at selisker@virginia.edu or Secretary Amanda Sigler at ams4rf@virginia.edu)
- III. Treasurer's report
 - A. The book sale last year represented GESA's first fundraising effort. The book sale was so successful that we decided to hold another one this year.
 - B. This year, in the pre-book sale exclusively for eng-grads, we made almost \$700.
 - C. The next step will be preparing for the main book sale, open to the general public. Volunteers are needed to help organize this event, which will likely take place about a month from now near the fortuitous time of Parents' Weekend. We will need a volunteer

to schedule the event and arrange for a venue with tables. We will also need volunteers to transport the books to the site of sale, and we will need more volunteers to run the sale during the day. If you are interested, please contact Treasurer Ryan Cordell (rcc8j@virginia.edu).

- D. GESA dues are \$15 and contribute to the myriad activities and initiatives which GESA plans and develops for graduate students. Please place your dues in Ryan Cordell's mailbox.

IV. GESA website

- A. The GESA website, designed by Kristen Taylor and newly updated by webmaster Scott Selisker, is up.
- B. Visit it for information about upcoming GESA events, maps to Dawson's Row (esp. for your students), and other useful and exciting information at <http://www.engl.virginia.edu/gesa/>.
- C. Anyone with announcements may email them to Scott and request that they be added to the website. Area reps organizing reading groups, anyone taking photos of eng-grads, and others who would like to make contributions to the website are encouraged to contact Scott (selisker@virginia.edu).

V. Textual studies reading group (announcement made by Fran Connor)

- A. Fran Connor and Ken Price are organizing a bibliographical and textual studies reading group. Bibliography is one of UVA's highlights, and the University is known for its strong tradition in textual studies.
- B. Fran and Ken are hoping to create a textual studies group that will consist both of students writing bibliography-centered dissertations and of students expressing a general interest in the field. This mixture of dissertating scholars and new talent should make for a vibrant combination.
- C. Fran and Ken will set up an organizational meeting for this group. Interested parties are invited to make themselves known. (Contact: Fran at fxc7z@Virginia.EDU)

VI. Departmental issues

- A. Graduate funding is the biggest issue facing GESA and the Department.
- B. The external review has just come in. Other peer departments and rising departments are offering increasingly larger packages to their PhD students.
- C. We will be examining the program to see what kinds of improvements could be made with more funding. Additional funds, for example, could be used to support dissertation fellowships.

VII. MA program

- A. The major issue is teaching.
- B. An email requesting MA feedback will be sent out again, since there were not many responses the first time it was distributed.
- C. MAs who would like to have teaching opportunities and who would like to serve on a committee examining such opportunities should email MA reps Ania Wieckowski (aw6k@Virginia.EDU) or John Jackson (jmj8m@virginia.edu).

VIII. First-year series

- A. A volunteer is needed to organize the first-year series.
- B. The first-year series panels usually address issues of professionalization, such as attending conferences, publishing articles, and preparing for an academic career. These

panels are directed toward first-year students as a way of preparing them for the years ahead, but anyone may attend.

- C. Ideally, the first-year series will begin in November or early December.
- D. Anyone interested in volunteering for this position should contact a GESA Board member. John Jackson will be especially happy to receive your request to serve (jmj8m@virginia.edu).

IX. Sub-committee on minority recruitment

- A. A sub-committee is currently being formed. Graduate students have also addressed this issue in the past.
- B. Anyone interested in serving on this committee should talk to a GESA Board member.

X. Area representatives

- A. We are still in need of 1 Medieval rep and 1 Renaissance rep.
- B. Those interested in filling these positions should contact Vice President Sarah Bishop (srb9w@virginia.edu).

XI. Graduate conference

- A. A graduate conference committee is currently being formed. This committee will plan and organize our annual conference.
- B. Those interested in serving on the committee should contact Sarah Bishop (srb9w@virginia.edu).

XII. OED Raffle (for compact OED dictionary with supplements and magnifying glass, items donated to book sale): Congratulations to Erin Kelly, winner of the OED raffle!