GSA General Assembly Meeting
October 19, 2011

Report from the “Academics and Professional Development Committee”

By Oliver Bunn

1. Dissertation Progress Report (DPR)

- Our committee is currently in the middle of the process to prepare a draft for the revision of the DPR.
- The DPR in 2012 will have the same basic appearance and the same flow of information as the DPR in 2011, because a major overhaul requires input from ITS that will not happen until 2013, maybe even 2014.
- Deans Harper-Mangels and Barnaby also work on a draft for a revised DPR and we will have a discussion about the two drafts two weeks from now.
- Summary of some points of the committee’s discussion so far:
  - We aim for a foreword by Dean Pollard, explaining the purpose and scope of the DPR.
  - Introductory text will include information about the involved parties and their role in the report.
  - Students are allowed to use their department’s annual assessment (if it exists) instead of writing a separate report.
  - Students will be asked about meeting frequency and format as well, not just the advisors.
  - Overall tone of the DPR will be much lighter.
  - Focus of DPR will be academic progress, hence professional development will be left out of DPR.

2. Next Meeting

- Wednesday, October 26:
  - From noon until 12.30pm committee meeting in the McDougal Common Room to prepare meeting with Dean Harper-Mangels.
  - From 12.30pm until 1.30pm meeting with Dean Harper-Mangels in order to discuss DPR Review.

3. Nominations

- Resolution 11-002 (from September 21, 2011) has delegated the authority to make nominations for the following four positions to the Academics and Professional Development committee:
  - University’s library committee (already appointed on September 7, 2011),
  - Graduate Teaching Center advocate,
  - Graduate Career Services advocate,
o Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity advocate.

• The nominees will be presented today and our committee will ask for approval from the general assembly.

4. Mentoring Week and Graduate Mentoring Award

• No online information about the Graduate Mentoring Award on the Graduate School’s webpage.
  Since last week, there is a section on the award on the GSA webpage in our committee’s section, including a brief description of the award, the past winners since 2000, and excerpts from the nomination letters of the graduate students.

• Our committee will bring two resolutions in front of the general assembly two weeks from today concerning Mentoring Week and the presentation of the Graduate Mentoring Award:
  o We will make the suggestion to formally discontinue Mentoring Week.
    ▪ It has not found broad acceptance. The events were predominantly frequented by people that cared very deeply about mentoring anyway and did not contribute to change people’s perceptions about the need for and the role of mentoring.
  o We will moreover suggest announcing the Graduate Mentoring Award two weeks before the Dean’s Spring Reception and present the award at the reception.
    ▪ In 2011, the award was announced during Mentoring Week and presented during Convocation.
    ▪ As we suggest discontinuing Mentoring Week, there has to be a new announcement date.
    ▪ The advantage of the Dean’s reception is that we reach a much broader audience than just the participants of the Convocation festivities.
    ▪ The only drawback might be the weather situation, as the presentation ceremony should best be outdoors, but there is no tent during the Spring Reception in contrast to Convocation.

5. Future Topics and Getting Involved

• Besides the reform of the DPR, the committee will also begin a discussion about the following topics in the very near future:
  o Teaching situation,
  o professional development.

• If you want to get involved, please contact the committee’s chair Oliver Bunn (oliver.bunn@yale.edu) or the committee’s secretary Marianne Wilson (Marianne.wilson@yale.edu).