GEA Meeting

Friday, February 8, 2019, JHB 719, 4-6pm

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of the Agenda

 a) Stephanie motions to add electing a new GEC member to “New Business”

 b) PhD1 report will follow exec reports (Kelly needs to leave early, with regrets)

 c) Alex motions to approve, Sarah seconds, motion passes

3. Approval of Minutes from Nov. 30 2018

 Brittney motions to approve, Sarah seconds, motion passes

4. General Announcements, if any

Alex: GEAC had another meeting today; most planning work done – looking for volunteers (Apr. 26) for small tasks and behind-the-scenes fun

Zak will put out a call for volunteers on FB and listserv – asks for draft message from GEAC to circulate

Caroline Levine’s the keynote! Incredible lineup of speakers! Roundtable discussion on pedagogy and grad student life! CLRG plus Nineteenth Century Reading Group working on an event with Levine!

GEA says great job!!

Pub night to follow!

5. Reports

 a) President’s Report

 Three things to be discussed later have been on radar for a while – more info later – most pressing issue is GEC meeting next week re: comps – going to elect a new rep today to increase grad student impact – Zak has been clear that PhD1s and PhDUs deserve clarity about what comes after this meeting

 Kelly motions, Alex seconds, motion passes

 b) Vice-President’s Report

 Fields info session, job searches concluded – thanks to all who came out!

 Visitors’ Day upcoming! Let us know if you want to volunteer

 Discussion of comps voted “in camera”

 Alex motions to approve, Apala seconds, motion passes

 c) Treasurer’s Report

 GEA doing well in terms of funds – Echolocation debate to be held later

 Board game night to be held as fundraiser this year

 Cody motions to approve, Brittney seconds, motion passes

 d) Secretary’s Report

Directory – hoping it will be housed on department website – good advertising for

school – Stephanie: this is all part of a discussion about staff-student relations

more broadly, and department showing support for students

Cody motions to approve, Alex seconds, motion passes

 e) GSU Report

Zak filling in for Karl – reading his notes:

* Union’s general membership unable to receive financial statement; Office of Vice-Provost DID receive it though, which is great – all funding could have been imperilled, but is not – Executive Committee has assured council there will be no negative consequences as result of breached agreement – General Council voted to decrease quorum membership for special meeting from 300 to 150 people
* Zak: if something bad did happen with funding, I would be embarrassed if entire GEA membership didn’t show up – this could have imperilled mental health funds, etc. – very important we don’t sit on our hands when such situations arise; don’t want to allow province/university to undermine student benefits and union

 Alex motions to approve, Cody seconds, motion passes

 f) International Students’ Report

 Sara under the weather, sends regrets

 Gab excited to participate in Visitors’ Day, hopes to see a lot of intl students there

 Stephanie: we can include a letter from Intl Students’ Rep in Visitors’ Day

mailout

Stephanie motions, Daniel seconds, motion passes

 g) CUPE Steward(s) Report

 No Stewards present – Jake is in a class right now – postponed for later

 h) Equity Report

No rep present – Brandon Taylor has volunteered – need to get this position filled from the start of the year; good position for those interested in advocacy

 i) ACCUTE Report

 June 1-4; there is a lottery for paying students’ accommodations – ask Sarah H if

you have questions!!

Question from Alex re: status of grad student survey this year? Will look into further – can contact Daniel for info

Alex: we could publicize events and submission deadlines even more – do our

best to navigate the mystical world of ACCUTE

Stephanie motions, Cody seconds, motion passes

 j) MA Report

 Nothing to report!

 Alex motions to approve, everyone seconds, motion passes

 k) MACRW Report

CRWs extending congrats to Cody Caetano and Fawn Parker on their new chapbooks

Motion unanimously passes

 l) PhD1 Report

 Concerns over comps – most directly affected

 History of English requirement got filled up real fast (as with last year) – maybe a

summer course would be a good alternative here, for future years? Stephanie: will

depend entirely on Carol Percy – but this issue of enrolment is a continuing issue:

if they’re going to require it, it should be available to PhDs to take

Gab: we want to get out of the way of incoming years, get this course done – what about

a grad student as course instructor for Old English?

Chelsea: Is there enough of a critical mass to get department to pay for another term of

teaching?

 Zak: There just needs to be more space in these classes

Putting comps concerns on the table: finding supervisors quickly within new

timeframes

Making sure faculty can be contacted over the summer

Concerns over how long the fields list has ended up being

 We really just want this to happen; concrete knowledge about what comes next

Stephanie: Zak and I already in talks with Cannon about playing a role in finding

supervisors

Zak: you won’t lose marks or points for being a bit “behind” the new timeline – it’s

expected that this year’s cohort will approach the process slightly differently – Cannon

and Lynne Magnusson big advocates against staff apathy and difficulty contacting

potential supervisors over summer

Stephanie: doing the whole committee at once is seen as advantage because it gives

opportunity to meet with different people who could be your supervisor who might not

have immediately come to mind

Use your SSHRC proposals as way in to these conversations

Zak: profs are getting paid to supervise!! They should!!

Gab motions to approve, Cody seconds, motion passes

 m) PhD2 Report

 Things moving along OK – thanks to Stephanie for special fields workshop

 Everyone wants this dang motion to pass (motioned, seconded, APPROVED)

 n) PhD3 Report

 Everyone super appreciative of GEA’s hard work and success this year

Post-fields, there is a downturn in efficiency and direction; can take up to 2 years to finish first

chapter; but now there’s a workshop, held this year for first time, for people who haven’t yet written first chapter – contact Alex to voice support and get more info – generating a community, with faculty oversight, for writing process (workshop will meet every 2 weeks) – Dan Newman is running it, who’s fantastic; funding from Milestones and Pathways

Contact: alex.sarra.davis@mail.utoronto.ca

Zak: as incentives decrease to hit the job market, department needs to provide better incentives to graduate – these kinds of initiatives are necessary to get people to write and get them outside comfort of this institution – reward people for finishing quickly! Get a “distinction” marker on your transcript!

Stephanie motions to approve, everyone says let’s pass it

 o) ABD Report

 Not much else to add – love the idea of this new workshop

 Stephanie motions to approve, all are in favour of this idea, motion passes

 p) Conference Committee Report

 Already happened!

 q) Social Committee Report

Not much to say – we’re gonna get on the ball – Brown Bag Lunch with creative

writers upcoming (going to change the date)

 Motion passes, thanks to all

6. New Business

a) Future of Comprehensive Exams (vote upcoming Feb. 13): discussion chaired by Zak and Stephanie

 Apala: will info session persist? Stephanie: yes, very likely – info session with P.

Downes for PhD1s

Colleen: need to think about how change of fields-writing deadline to May of

second year will impact when courses are offered

Molly: seeking clarity on what is being voted on (at special GEC meeting next week) –

Stephanie: we’ll be voting not on whether comps happens but on a specific set of

motions – the choice is: 72-hour comps exam vs. new timeline/new number of

texts/new exam format (these motions will be circulated this week) for fields

Molly will fill in as GEC rep for absent members

 b) Echolocation Requesting Extra Funds (see attachment): discussion chaired by Apala

 If anyone requests more than $100 from GEA, we have to vote – funding proposal

on table from Echolocation editors (Helen and Cody)

 Going to make sure we don’t run into this issue again (a constitutional issue –

aiming to get funds claimed in a single fiscal year)

Helen:

What happened: $400 allocated last year, then another $400 this year – cheque given last year was not deposited due to disruption in managing staff (could not get access to bank account)

Proposal: to receive the $400 from last year AND this year ($800 in total)

Rationale: last year’s issue did not turn out as successfully as usual – seeking to return to older Echolocation model, make it matter again – need better publishing quality, want to pay submitters more, hold a launch party (better recognition in community – the publication would be better able to meet its mandate)

 Editors have already commissioned the graphic design for this year’s poster and issue – submissions through Submittable (increasing reach); website revamped

 Editors now have access to bank account for sure! There is a little money in there, and GSU funding will help, but GEA funding will make more of an impact

Before printing costs, budget estimate stands at $893 (see draft proposal for complete breakdown of items)

Echolocation is a representative of grad students and of department – setting up legacy for next managing staff

Cody:

Important to remember whole department is involved in this (MAs and PhDs too) – provides experience with arts management even for those who are not creative writers

Helen: what we’re focusing on is the transition period – getting the operation back up and running, to be handed over to next managing editors

Apala: could this happen again? Why did funds not get transferred over?

 Zak: managerial incompetence from last year – cheque didn’t even get cashed

Apala: context from a budgetary perspective: we get about $1600-1700 from GSU every year; we are usually able to save $400-500; our annual budget is usually $3000, and Echolocation cheque usually is the biggest chunk of that

 But, it’s important to note (thanks Chelsea!), that this funding change will essentially not make a difference to GEA’s finances for this year – funding already allotted and just not cashed

Sean: did this affect head grant? Apala: no; Sean: could we perhaps distribute this money as two $400 cheques and include a note in Head Grant Application next year with rationale (to avoid having funding reduced by GSU)

Alex: going forward, Echolocation funding will continue to be $400? Zak: yes – and we will make it clear at next meeting that committee heads need to claim their funds within the year Alex: $400 a year seems like a reasonable sum; fixing this one mistake seems worthwhile

Dustin: how will this money be used? What portion will go toward long-term

sustainability of the journal? Is 400$ a year in future sustainable?

Helen: we want to pay contributors more this year, and pay for Squarespace account for website – also graphic design and typesetting: cost depends on whether someone on the staff that year has skills needed to take on that task – use of funds are negotiable on yearly basis – also want to start applying for grants to avoid having GEA funds be the be-all and end-all of journal funding

Aidan: do people have to pay to submit? Any grant funding this year?

 Expresses sympathy about journal having to work with such limited funds

c) Student-Staff Relations and Events: discussion chaired by Daniel

 Seems to be a misunderstanding about what the SSRC is for, among faculty –

SSRC supposed to be about promoting extra-academic activities

Stephanie: what we’re hoping to get is a sense of what we as grad students value in terms of staff-student relations broadly – cold be related to how much feedback we get on papers, etc. – are we trying to reify distinction between grad students and faculty? No, the opposite

Hoping to put together a better transition document for GEA-SSRC members next year

Aidan: some delayed reaction on feedback for MAs seems understandable – but if PhDs are not getting feedback, who are training for their careers, that’s unconscionable

Molly: feedback and response times vary from prof to prof – certain people not pulling their weight as much – there was a lack of availability even for making appointments in advance re: SSHRC applications (to talk through ideas)

Confused about how there could be a final grade without comments

Sarah: shouldn’t there be a rule about this?

Gab: is there anything in place to hold professors accountable for providing feedback? No – Gab prefers honesty and clear communication rather than being in limbo about whether comments will be forthcoming (if you don’t have time to write feedback, be up front about that)

Colleen: could a communal standard be put in place?

Profs being up-front about whether things will be late would be great

Helen: frustrating that professors think that boundaries between grad students and profs need to be reified – can be uncomfortable to put together a committee and ask for a supervisor; don’t wanted to be greeted with a stonewall – bad for morale, bad for time to completion

 Zak: this attitude will not help people finish on time or help find supervisors – it’s ridiculous that this pushback is coming from junior faculty (there should be some solidarity)

 Helen: very strange to be 28 and feeling like I’m being treated like a child – infantilizing

Chelsea: ask the faculty, what do they value in interactions with graduate students? Stress advantages for all of shared participation

Sean: some context for this is a desire to reduce exploitation of power imbalances (see: issues at Concordia last year) – but it’s not either/or; a set of recommended guidelines could be drawn up to avoid perception of an opportunity of anything untoward happening through SSRC

Stephanie: will put out a SurveyMonkey with questions about what grad students value re: relationships with faculty

RESULT OF VOTE ON ECHOLOCATION: unanimous vote for YES – giving them the $800

7. Adjournment

 a) Pub night to follow at the Green Room, 414 College St at 7pm