GEA Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 1, 2016 JHB 719, from 4:30-5:30pm

1. Call to Order

Members in attendance:

Zak Jones

Daniel Bergman

Apala Das

Stephanie Redekop

Karl Fritze – GSU Rep

Karl Manis

Gabriel Briex

Jake Morrow – CUPE and MACRW Rep

Aidan Selmer

Sarah Cole \_ DnD Rep

Alex Wichert – MA Rep

Dustin Batty – Conference Committee

Emily Leahy – PhD1

Chelsea Latremouille – PhD2 and Conference Committee

Kelly Whitehead – PhD1

Sarah Howden – ACCUTE Rep, Social Committee

Colleen McDonell – GEC and Conference Committee

David Johnston

Michael Baptista

Sarah Ameri

Alex Sarra-Davis – very sweet boy (PhD3 and Conference Committee)

Sean McPhail – ABD Rep

1. Approval of Agenda
   1. Kelly motions, Karl F seconds, motion passes
2. Approval of Minutes from 22 September 2017
   1. Kelly motions, Sarah H seconds, motion passes
3. General Announcements
4. Holiday party will follow meeting at 6:30pm at Pauper’s Pub
5. Chelsea requests that FB posts be circulated on listserv – Zak responds that most messages already do get posted in both places, but it’s a good thing to keep in mind (FB seems to be a good tool for gauging public interest in an event and whether it needs additional promotion)
6. Reports
7. President’s Report
   1. Brown Bag Lunches going well, social committee figuring out what the hell it should do – next one coming up is a talk from Erin Shields and Paul Stevens (playwright of Paradise Lost adaptation at Stratford) – thanks to Kelly for that idea – creative writers also hosting a BBL
   2. Two successful BBLs so far: Avery Slater and Adam Hammond (computer stuff)
   3. Academics Read Things They Wrote as Kids coming up next term – embarrassing juvenilia read aloud – we encourage people to dive into the darkest corners of their computers – will be attended by faculty too
   4. We want people to keep putting forward ideas about talks we’d like to have, events we’d like to go to as a group
   5. Attendance is up to HISTORIC levels thanks to renewed community interest, activity on FB page, proactive cohort reps – everyone’s participation is appreciated
   6. GEA has been involved in job searches (not 100% top-down decision): 17th-c. (John Rogers and Leah Whittington), South Asian studies at UTM in December (as soon as we know more, will update the membership) – students are welcome to join one of the candidates for coffee at Bar Mercurio
   7. It’s easy for faculty to dismiss the GEA’s role in the department, but it’s becoming less so
   8. Sarah C motions, Emily seconds, motion passes
8. Vice President’s Report
   1. Welcome Committee organization coming up – library tours, campus tours, volunteers needed for Visitor’s Day in winter semester – email Stephanie if interested
      1. Volunteers for billeting visiting students would also be much appreciated
   2. Thinking about hosting an Alt-Ac panel next semester – suggestions for what you’d like to see would be welcome (specific job fields you’d like to hear from?)
   3. Holiday cards for department admins – please stick around and sign them!
   4. GEC Comps Update:
      1. Cannon soliciting thoughts from everyone – please send them!
      2. Proposal: comps removed, fields extended by 20 texts – half of those texts drawn from set fields, others chosen in consultation with supervisor (picked in spring of year 1) – project proposal would be written after fields – Zak and Stephanie both involved in drafting motions – also, thanks to GEA members involved earlier in the process
      3. Karl M asks question about coursework being cut down to accommodate heavier winter semester in Year 1 – no plans to do that as of yet
      4. Alex S-D suggests that impetus to make first summer useful is driving the loading-up of the winter semester – possibility to change supervisor or field is written into the system (only have to set a particular chunk of your list before the summer, can change things up in the fall)
      5. Zak stresses that if you’re having a hard time finding a committee or supervisor, let us know because we can help answer your questions – if a faculty member is not playing ball, tell us and we can help advocate on your behalf to the administration
      6. Stephanie: Planning Committee will probably convene twice more before final vote – vote in February WILL determine whether comps go forward for PhD1s or if the new structure will be immediately put in place – BUT, at the same time, change won’t take effect immediately in February, it will also have to go through SGS – but SGS likely won’t object
      7. Alex S-D reminding people that faculty’s job is to help PhD1s with this transition – ask professors directly if they are interested in supervising – get in touch to get your voices heard before the vote
      8. Sarah H motions, Emily seconds, motion passes
9. Treasurer’s Report
   1. Thank you to Sean McPhail, previous treasurer, who handed down very meticulous account-keeping system
   2. Head Grant application has been submitted – cheque has been received and cashed (fall instalment) – winter cheque will depend on GSU meeting attendance – thanks to Karl F for attending GSU meetings!
   3. We have money!! For reading groups ($20 for whole year), cohort parties ($75), etc. – claim it before GEA Exec transitions in June/July!
   4. Karma Yoga travel grant will be opening for applications late in winter semester
   5. Working to come up with a step-by-step reimbursement process and put it up on website (talk to Apala in advance, keep receipts, provide receipts to Apala so we can get another Exec member to co-sign) – please cash your reimbursement cheques!!
   6. Fundraising continues to be an issue – want to put that on the front-burner – will need to talk to professors on SSRC about what we’re doing this year – accepting ideas from GEA membership – Sean: goal is $400-500 (and more is better!) – Zak will consult retired professors about sponsoring the travel grant (selling off naming rights) or raising other funds – we want to, as Stephanie points out, preserve the idea of building social networks between students and faculty
   7. Chair’s Office also offers conference travel grant – students applying for GEA grant must have exhausted other sources of conference funding available at UofT
   8. Fundraising continues to be an issue – want to put that on the front-burner - Sean motions, Jake seconds, motion passes
10. Secretary’s Report
    1. Thanks to everyone who helped make softball game and Research Roundtable a success
    2. Student directory forthcoming – bio and bibliography? Description of award projects?
    3. Kelly motions, Emily seconds, motion passes
11. GSU Report
    1. GSU AGM is this Monday, Wilson Hall at New College at 6:15pm sharp – minutes from last year are online
    2. Shout-outs are coming up for activity or event funding from UTGSU
    3. GSU has its own conference bursary ($250, 120 giving out yearly)
    4. Internal Commissioner forced out at last meeting
    5. Sean motions, Kelly seconds, motion passes
12. CUPE Stewards’ Report(s)
    1. CUPE stuff is boring right now, read your emails!
    2. Karl F motions, Aidan seconds, motion passes
13. Equity Representatives Report
    1. Still looking for equity reps!
14. MA and MACRW Reports
    1. Jake (MACRW): Dec. 5 at 8pm at the Piston – creative writers putting on a concert
    2. Aidan and Alex W: MAs had a small cohort event this past weekend at Cavalcade of Lights – the first one this year
    3. MAs had some concerns about deadline for applications to PhD at UofT (Dec. 12 earlier than some other schools) – interest in setting up a kind of essay-sharing and proofreading committee (Zak: GEA can make sure that room is available if MAs want to organize something like that)
    4. Alex S-D: GEA might not have power to change application dates, but GEA could facilitate some kind of “support group” for the stress that comes with applying for PhD at same time as doing MA (grad student volunteers to help with paperwork, reading drafts of proposals, etc.) – another idea would be workshops about how to turn a term paper into a conference application or article submission (Stephanie: reading groups could be an avenue for facilitating this; Emily: SGS has lots of workshops re: abstracts too)
    5. We appreciate our reps!!
    6. Gab motions, Kelly seconds, motion passes
15. PhD 1 Report – Kelly Whitehead and Emily Leahy
    1. Nothing pressing – some concerns about PhDU status, being stuck between two cohorts (Emily thinking about raising this with Cannon) – this concern raised with UTQAP assessors
    2. POSTIVE. MENTAL. ATTITUDE. (but not PhDUs, they are angry)
    3. Alex S-D motions, Sean seconds, motion passes
16. PhD 2 Report – Chelsea Latremouille
    1. No particular concerns, Form A submitted
    2. Probably going to organize Special Fields workshop led by people who have written the fields (upper-year PhDs)
    3. Karl M emphasizes that upper-years are very happy to help with advice about committees and special fields
    4. Alex and Alex motion and second, motion passes
17. PhD 3 Report – Alex Sarra-Davis
    1. Alex S-D emphasizes importance of student input on comps proposal – some sort of social event will be forthcoming
    2. Proposed New Timeline for Special Fields can be found on last page of draft motions – Alex W motions, Kelly seconds, motion passes
18. ABD Report – Sean McPhail
    1. Some people have passed fields, some have graduated – looking forward to Summer Thesis Fellowship ($500 per PhD student given to department) – your summer after 4th year is paid to write, and it takes 4th-years out of competition for summer TA-ships (can’t teach and hold STF at same time)
    2. Can’t do School of Criticism and Theory in same year as STF, so plan ahead!
    3. Kelly motions, Dustin seconds, motion passes
19. International Students’ Report – Gab Briex and Sarah Ameri
    1. No major issues – visas will be an important issue to take into account for Visitor’s Day (in terms of explaining to potential incoming students how student visa process works, walking people through important terminology – we want to get in touch with international students before they get to Canada and make sure they know about the quirks of our department)
    2. Invitation extended to other international students to make their voices heard and come up with new event ideas
    3. Interested in helping with Visitor’s Day, maybe offering Skype talks with potential students
    4. Make sure students know they can get their travel paid for
    5. Alex S-D’s update from GEC: cap on international students has been removed, and department can accept as many as they want (now that PhD student international tuition has dropped to domestic tuition status)
    6. Sarah C motions, Sarah H seconds, motion passes
20. ACCUTE report – Sarah Howden
    1. Nothing to report
21. Adjournment
    1. Kelly motions, Aidan seconds, motion passes