

GPSA Notes January 30th

Amir Selmanovic, PhD Representative:

People are concerned about losing funding.

Paul Goodfellow, MA Rep:

Nothing to report.

Alex Gannon, Colloquium:

Going to start meeting at Wednesdays at 1, people have the opportunity to sign up.

GPSA (Grant Fruhwirth & Tyler Schroeder):

30 Days of Pullman, benefits for students at local businesses, must show Cougar Card.

Upcoming GPSA events: board game night, bingo night, end of year celebration

Chris Schlect, hiring committee:

The current search has been whittled down to 10, and the committee will be conducting preliminary interviews over conference calls and will be presenting candidates to faculty for an on-campus interview soon. There will be opportunities for students to meet with the faculty, urge students to attend these meetings to encourage quality faculty to end up at WSU.

Andrea suggested the dates they visit varied so students who are busy at different times can attend.

Paolo Guttadauro, Faculty Representative:

Strategic Review:

Dr. Sun has instituted a process examining what the direction of the department is. This will be a long process with weekly meetings probably going into the fall. The faculty agreed to start by discussing the graduate program and figure out what fields they want to emphasize and what are the limitations of the department going forward.

Phil Travis, Grad Studies Representative:

The slashing of assistantship due to changes in GenEd means that there are 23 people who are coming back next year and exactly 23 funded positions. In order to accept new applicants, the Grad Studies Committee will rank people over the next month and evaluate current students against prospective students. If they deem a potential student to be of higher value to the program, then they will cut the current student's funding. Graduate Studies Committee: Boag, Goucher, Kawamura, McCoy, Sun.

The ranking criteria will loosely be centered around GPA, evaluations relating to TA performance, evaluations from professors and advisors, and meeting department deadlines on time. It is not known how much weight will be placed on these factors or if other factors will be considered. After ranking, the bottom of current students will be placed against potential applicants. Timing is essential because students who are in risk need to be notified as soon as possible. Ranking procedure should be finished by the end of February, and the HGSA officers will continue to pressure them on this.

Part of the decision process rests on the nature of contracts that were signed. Those currently in their first and second year have loosely worded contracts, putting them at higher risk

than a student in the third year of the program. Third year students have passed prelims and they don't want to cut such people. The number of who will lose their funding is not yet certain, but it could be significant. There are 20 students who are on first or second year wanting funding next year and 25 applicants. 11 of the 25 applicants are theoretically incomplete and fouled up by Graduate School, which is slowing down the decision making process.

This signifies a beginning of a cultural change in the department, with GenEd disappearing means ability to be a grad student is at a supreme, ability to be a TA less important. The department has adopted a philosophy to go after the best applicants and secure the strength of the program.

It is recommended to get in touch with your advisors and determine if you have completed everything that you need to take care of, if not take care of business.

General Discussion:

Andrea: will we be told our rank?

Haven't been told yet. Students are not supposed to know their ranking. Hopefully we can encourage the graduate studies committee to notify students who at high risk.

Chris S.: It would be helpful for people who don't want to be professional historians earlier to know so that they can make decisions about their lives.

Mandy: 3 or more years ago funding was competitive. GenEd program led a lot more people in.

Jacki: They always rank the incoming candidates. To a point that could help determine who is funded. Ranking can create an extremely competitive environment—can motivate students, but will change the dynamics of the department.

Phil: The reason we have this situation is that the bubble is taken away and we are forced to make tough decisions. The bubble has popped, we are in a business that is restructuring.

We don't know if PhD's and MA's will be ranked together or separately.

Paolo: Dr. Sun emphasized that terminating someone's funding is not enjoyable. Time and money that the department has invested is gone. Dr. Sun is not happy about doing this, but it is necessary.

Jacki and Chris: Concern over changing relationship within department based on ranking system. Would they care what the students think about publication of ranking.

Paolo: Options include No knowledge, finding out rank individually, low risk-medium risk-high risk, public ranking available to everyone.

Tyler: Other funding opportunities available on campus, Vancouver TAships. Rankings are occurring as we speak. This semester cannot be factored in, because the decisions will be made before the semester is over.

Inconsistencies between how evaluations have been evaluated in the last year. Have professors began evaluating more harshly? Does this put a first year at a disadvantage?

Phil: First years are not necessarily on the chopping block. Difficulties in terms of quantifying things. We do not know at this time how much time will be placed on each element.

Andrea: Encourage everyone to look at your evaluations. Some professors are harsh in ways that do not seem fair. It is your right to see what is in them.

Jennifer: Will I be facing this process every year? Uncertainty every year?

Paolo: It seems that this is going to be the new normal.

Phil: Once you are ABD there will be less uncertainty. Paolo: problem with prelims being in the third year. Need three years of funding to get to that less uncertainty.

Andrea: Clarification between ABD and third year. Needs to be specified.

Vancouver: Are the MA's at Vancouver included in the ranking? Option for those to get cut to go work in Vancouver? This will need to be discussed in further meetings with the faculty, how this transformation can happen.

Phil: This is not cut and dry. The professors are going to consider things that are not just numbers. If your advisor is willing to fight for you, then you are probably in a better position.

Amir: Evaluations will go back all the way to the first semester. So an early semester can hurt you.

Chris S.: We should have a graduate student deliberation and present that to the department.

Amir: Is there a process to appeal? Phil: If you've taken care of business and done everything you need to do and still lost funding than you can potentially appeal to the Ombudsman.

Jacki: Recently brought to her attention about the lack of teaching experience available to ABD's. Are they going to remove something that is necessary for us to get a job? At the moment the department prioritizes adjuncts over ABD's. You want a program that can place people—we need teaching experience to help placement. Need to emphasize this teaching aspect! We need to have the opportunities to build our skills and be competitive in the job market.