HGSA General Meeting

February 9, 2011

Attendees: Cherri, Mandy, Andrea, Beth, Shawna, Nathan Marr, Dr. Sun, Nathan Roberts, Nathan Sowry, Johnna, Grant, Paul Goodfellow

Meeting called to order 10:08 am

I. Graduate Student Offices-Dr. Sun
   a. Dr. Sun wants to foster a culture of openness and respect which includes faculty and graduate students
   b. He made the choice to move Laura as Dr. Boag's Research Assistant into an office by herself
      i. Dr. Boag has been waiting for an office for his RA for quite some time
      ii. Did not look to see what the graduate student office situation was before moving Laura and apologized for overlooking this
   c. Dr. Sun said that he understood why many of the graduate students were upset that there was a lack of transparency
   d. He also noted that there needs to be respect for the Research Assistant position
   e. Crowding in the graduate student offices is a short term problem. Next year there will be fewer graduate students and in the future the program will most likely be downsized so overcrowding won't be a continual problem.
   f. Dr. Sun established the role of the RA and also the Endowed Chair:
      i. Endowed Chair: took 3 years to find Dr. Boag
         1. Included in his position is either a TA or RA
         2. Dr. Boag was brought into the WSU History Department to make our American West and Pacific Northwest program into a national leader
      ii. The department plans to maintain an office specifically for the RA
   g. Questions:
      i. Andrea-feels there should have been more transparency in regards to how the RA position was filled and that this lack of transparency was the beginning of animosity among many graduate students
      ii. Dr. Sun-As the chair of the department he does not have to announce every office move as that would result in an inundation of emails for everyone
         1. Perhaps the faculty assumed that the RA position was understood
         2. The RA selection process was, perhaps, not clearly communicated to the graduate students

3. Dr. Sun does not see a problem with having more openness in the RA selection process but he has not discussed this with Dr. Boag yet

II. HGSA Archive and Website-Cherri
   a. The website is up and running-check it out!
   b. All graduate students will be on the website with their name, hometown and research fields
      i. Beth and Johnna as the PhD and MA representatives are in charge of collecting this information from the graduate students
   c. Hard copies of the archived meeting notes are in Wilson 333

III. HGSA Bylaw Changes
   a. Bylaw changes were emailed to all graduate students, a copy is in the office
   b. Vote to put bylaws to a vote among the graduate students
      i. Vote passed with one dissenting vote-Andrea who expressed concern over the proposed change in election dates from the fall to spring semester which she feels would exclude new students from participating
      ii. Cherri offered that we could create a new student position specifically for incoming students and this position would be voted on in the fall
         1. There was much debate over this which resulted in another vote over whether the bylaws were ready to be put to a graduate student vote. Vote passed.
         2. If the bylaw changes are not passed by the graduate students as they are we will consider adding a new student HGSA position and other changes

IV. Performance Reviews
   a. Can the department do end of year evaluations as a way to enhance our professional development?
   b. Nathan and Grant will write a letter to Dr. Sun and Dr. Kawamura requesting year end evaluations.
      i. Anticipate resistance from faculty

V. Preliminary Exam Proposed Change
   a. Contrary to rumors circulating the department, HGSA only proposes a more stream lined method of prelim exams wherein students could receive their exam questions prior to the exam.
   b. A letter will be submitted to the department to see if this is possible.
   c. This agenda item will be revisited at the next agenda committee meeting.

VI. General comments
   a. Hoping for larger attendance from graduate students to provide feedback