

Jan. 12, 2017

Minutes PhD Committee meeting

1. Updates

- Students will receive locker assignments this week.
- Students are asking what the standard is for bibliographies:
 - There is no required number of texts for bibliography
 - The length and content of the bibliography is determined by the student and their committee
- Greg Shtraks is not responding to emails. He still has not been in contact with faculty since October 2016.

2. New business

a. PhD Committee communication and interaction with students

- Current students have indicated that they want to be part of developing the PhD program. Ideas for collaboration between the committee and students are:
 - Quarterly coffee hour
 - A student rep at committee meetings
 - Anonymous online feedback portal, which would give students the freedom to express individual opinions
 - A yearly meeting with students
 - A discussion to facilitate conversation between cohorts
 - Identify a cohort representative for each year
 - Social events
 - A mentor program
 - An archive of past information (reading lists, test questions)

Notes:

- Committee to student and committee to faculty communication is interrelated; communication to these two audiences should not be separate conversations
- Request was made for the archive to be open to faculty members
- An anonymous feedback form may not reflect the goal of open communication with students
- Past reading lists should be curated to accurately demonstrate program standards.
- Program records are already kept in the PhD administration file on the shared folder

Proposal:

Past reading lists will be added to Catalyst, accessible only to faculty and students, with the student name, year, region and foundational field. Only students who have passed exams will be asked for their reading list. All students will be asked for approval to post their reading list.

Unanimous vote yes to post reading lists.

Continued discussion

- The process of sending an anonymous letter is not best practice. Students should utilize academic advisors
- The first letter came about because students did not feel comfortable going to faculty or to Resat
- If a student complaint is made to an advisor that goes beyond advisor capacity, the advisor takes the issue to Wolf, who will take the issue forward
- The first cohort of Ph.D. students perceived the program to be threatening and sent a letter of retaliation
- Wolf will send an email to Ph.D. students inviting students to bring concerns to Sonja.
- Suggestion to send a Ph.D. program evaluation, to provide the Ph.D. committee with answers to the committee's questions about the students' experience
- Suggestion to record students' feedback as it is given in order to create institutional knowledge that can be passed along in the future
- Reminder that we promised to relay our plan of communication to students, so further action is needed from the committee
- A committee member is strictly against a student being present at every committee meeting.
- Another member likes the idea of a student guest; the guest would see that the committee is taking the task of open communication seriously
- Suggestion to regularly invite students to attend meetings
- Suggestion for the committee to meet with each cohort
- Suggestion to invite students to meetings in autumn (1 per cohort) and plan a social for spring quarter

Proposal

1. Student cohorts choose one representative; representatives are invited to attend the first Ph.D. committee meeting of the year
Unanimous vote yes.
2. Representatives will also be invited to the last meeting of the year.
Unanimous vote yes.
3. The committee will send an end of the year survey in spring 2017 to Ph.D. students.
Unanimous vote yes.