

Cultural Studies Student Organizing Committee

Meeting Minute

April 28, 2008

Spring 2008 (Last Meeting)

Johnson Center – Room G

Members in Attendance

1. Randall Cohn (Co-chair)
2. David Arditì (Co-chair)
3. Sara Mitcho (Treasurer)
4. Rob Gehl
5. John Woolsey
6. Katy Razzano
7. Joanne Clarke Dillman
8. Richard Otten
9. Michael Lecker
10. Michael Goebel
11. Dava Simpson
12. Cecilia Uy-Tioco
13. Nayantar (Tara) Sheoran (Secretary)

Minutes

• Co-Chair Leave-of-Absence

- Randall Cohn (incoming co-chair) will be on leave-of-absence from his SOC position for the Fall 2008 academic semester while studying abroad. He will return in January 2009.
- Since Randall did inform us all of this before the student body voted him into office, the students present at the meeting approve this leave-of-absence.
- David Arditì is willing to shoulder the responsibility for being “chair” rather than “co-chair” for the upcoming semester. He will be assisted in all his duties by the SOC executive committee members.
- Randall will continue to be in regular contact via email, and would like to stay involved and continue those responsibilities that can be handled remotely. He will also continue to chair the conference organizing committee for fall 2008.

• SOC Committee Updates

- The Program Planning committee’s name has been changed to The Conference Planning Committee and this committee is part of the SOC and will be largely responsible for coordinating the Annual Graduate Student conference. For this academic year it is headed by Michael Lecker and Michael Goebel.

- Roger Lancaster (Director) reported to Randall Cohn that, due to difficulties staffing the faculty committees required by the current program bylaws, he is planning to consolidate the faculty matter committee, the student matters committee, and the program planning committee into an expanded executive committee for the coming year (2008 -2009) A key priority of this expanded executive committee will be the completion of the current Program Review, and the subsequent revision of the bylaws in order to create a workable committee structure for the future.SOC Representatives already selected for those committees in the coming years will retain their official positions, however the SOC is agreeing to send the Committee of the Whole representatives to the expanded executive committee in lieu of separate committee meetings for the coming year.
 - Current Committee of the Whole representatives John Woosley and Lia Uy-Tioca will fulfill this function, and will also head an ad-hoc “executive SOC committee” to ensure that the new committee structure that is proposed by the Department is acceptable to the SOC, and continues to provide sufficient opportunities for student representation where appropriate.

- **Finances**

- Sara Mitcho and David Arditi checked the rules and it seems that SOC can sponsor student representation at academic conferences. To that end, they will propose a conference that a large portion of the Cultural Studies Student body would like to attend in Spring 2009. They will try to get a portion of the costs for that travel/accommodation/registration covered by the SOC requested funds.
- The finances are in line for the 2nd Annual Graduate Student Conference in Fall 2008. We can request up-to \$3500.00 for the conference from the Student Program Board. Though unlikely, if the conference requires addition funds, requests will be made out to the Provosts’ office, the philosophy department, and also possibly the Dean’s office. This is need dependent, hence tentative.

- **2nd Annual Graduate Student Conference – Histories of Violence**

- The planning committee has received 20 abstract submissions. The committee is meeting on Tuesday, May 6th, 2008 to discuss the acceptance procedure.
- The due date for submissions has been extended to May 15th, 2008.
- The newly formed Conference Planning Committee (comprising of Mike Lecker and Mike Goebel) will be actively participating in this years planning process and establishing the due process for the 3rd Annual Graduate Student Conference in Fall 2009. The process of topic submissions, the venue, the abstracts submission and acceptance process, etc.

- **Orientation 2008**

- David Arditì with help from Nayantara (Tara) Sheoran will be largely responsible for planning the Orientation 2008
- There will be an email call going out from David requesting names of students who are interested in mentoring the incoming class. Also this year we plan to match students with their mentors based on their interests (or perceived interests). Hence, when you email your name as a possible mentor, please include TWO or THREE lines clearly indicating your fields of specialization or interest. Hopefully, you will get to mentor a student who has similar interests.

- **SOC/CS Publication**

- Rob Gehl and Nayantara (Tara) Sheoran will look into possibilities for a department publication, including the possibility of reviving *Cultural Matters* as either a print or online journal. They will report back with specific proposals at the fall 2008 SOC meeting

- **Graduate Student Rights vs. Unionizing to address all labour issues on Campus**

- There was a general consensus among the CS community present at the meeting that the SOC should be involved in a process that initiates change in terms of labor on the academic campus. However, the concern at this point was the approach to this “change.” The prudent solution was to generate information about the student body and their concerns, as well as important background information about the history and current situation of university labor organizing in the state of Virginia, and then proceed with an appropriate course of action.
- To that end, David Artidi with help from students will design a survey aimed at arriving at the “status” of the CS student body – both academically and financially. This survey will be the first step in a long process, where we will use a ground-up approach to examine the student body’s concerns – both personally, academically, and for the larger labor community.
- If possible, the survey should be complete in time to provide complimentary data to that being gathered by the university for the CS program review currently underway
- Any student with a keen insight into survey design should contact David via email.