

Cultural Studies Student Organizing Committee

Meeting Minute

September 18, 2008

Fall 2008 (First Meeting)

SUB II – Room 3

Members in Attendance

1. David Ardit (Co-chair)
2. Rob Gehl
3. John Woolsey
4. Katy Razzano
5. Michael Lecker
6. Dava Simpson
7. Cecilia Uy-Tioco
8. Ozden Ocak
9. Sangmin Kin
10. Vicki Watts
11. Daniel Anderson
12. Nayantar (Tara) Sheoran (Secretary)

Minutes

• 2nd Annual Graduate Student Conference – Histories of Violence

- The committee is meeting on Thursday, October 2nd from 4:30 to 6:30 to discuss the details of the conference. If you would like to be involved in providing last minute assistance, please email John Woosley or show up at this meeting. David Ardit will be confirming location via email soon.
- Dave Ardit, with assistance from Michael Lecker is responsible for the food arrangements of the conference.
- We need a volunteer to be the point person responsible for handling the technology on the day of the conference. Please email John Woosley, if you would be interested in helping.
- Dava Simpson will be the official “greater” for the conference and responsible for name tags and sign up sheets.
- Michael Lecker has arranged all the panels, speakers, and moderators. Please contact him, if you would like to pre-read the abstracts or becoming involved in helping him.
- We are waiting to hear back on the amount of money that has been approved for the conference.

- Michael Lecker has sent out a call for proposed topics for the 3rd Annual Graduate Student Conference. Please respond to his email if you would like to be involved with the 2009 conference.
- **3rd Annual Graduate Student Conference – Topic and Planning**
 - The topic for 2009 conference will be decided upon by the SOC on Thursday, October 2nd, 2008. If you have submitted a topic and/or would like your vote to count toward making the final decision on the 2009 conference topic – please plan to be present at the meeting.
 - The newly formed Conference Planning Committee comprising Mike Lecker and Michael Goeble had to be re-voted on, since Michael Goeble is on a leave of absence for this academic year. Dava Simpson is replacing Michael Goeble on the committee. Also Nayantara Sheoran, will be assisting with the 2009 conference planning.
- **Collective response to the program changes suggested by Roger Lancaster (Director) and the executive committee.**
 - All members of the Cultural Studies community have received an email from Roger and the executive committee with a memo that lists some proposed program changes.
 - The meeting where these proposed changes will be discussed is scheduled for September 25th, 2008 and we hope to see a large turnout for this.
 - In light of the fact that these changes affect all members of the CS student body the SOC, with careful consideration and suggestions from senior PhD candidates and incoming class members, has decided to provide Roger and the Executive Committee a collective response that articulates some of the major concerns of the CS student body.
 - Rob Gehl has been elected as the spokesperson for the collective response. We will shortly be sharing with the student body the document that lists these collective concerns.
 - This collective response is in no way aimed to dissuade any CS student from voicing their individual concerns at the meeting. Please feel free to do this at the meeting after Rob has voiced the collective concerns. The collective response aims to channel our major concerns and save some time at the meeting by not voicing those same concerns repeatedly.
 - We will also be asking Roger why the two student representatives chosen by the SOC were not invited to any of the committee meetings where the program changes were first proposed/suggested. In light of this we will request Roger to ensure that the student representatives are allowed access to these meetings to voice the concerns of the student body. Lia and/or John will be emailing Roger to enquire about this since they both are the representatives of SOC.
- **Graduate Student Survey**
 - David Arditì with help from some CS students has designed 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, in which we will use a ground-up approach to examine the student body's concerns – both personally, academically, and for the larger labor community.

- Any student that would like a particular concern/question expressed on the survey should contact David immediately.
- **GMU Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA)**
 - As some have probably already noticed, Mason is forming a Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA).
 - David Arditì has attended the first meeting of the GAPSA. The second GAPSA meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 23rd. It will be held in Johnson Center, Room B from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm.
 - To represent the interests of the graduate students in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, David Arditì intends to run for the position of the President of GAPSA.
 - Also, at the SOC meeting we voted to elect David Arditì as the representative of the Cultural Studies SOC on the new GAPSA organizational structure.
 - We will also be running elections soon to fill the position of the representative of the Cultural Studies Program. There will be a call for nominations and the election process soon.
 - David Arditì is establishing his 5 major platform points for the election and would appreciate the help and support of all CS members. If you would like to be involved with this directly and/or help David out in any way, please email him immediately. Time is of essence here because the elections are scheduled for late October.
- **Extended Mentorship Program**
 - The processes of the Cultural Studies Program are rather confusing to most students in the program. The “hoop jumping” processes need a bit more clarification as per the SOC.
 - To that end, Vicki Watts has suggested an extended mentorship program coupled with an informal/alternative Cultural Studies Students Handbook.
 - The handbook would recount personal experiences and offer words of wisdom on how to organize and approach the various process of the program.
 - Vicki Watts has started work on this handbook and will be sending out an email shortly to collect material for this handbook in an organized manner. Be on the look out for that email.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 2nd, 2008 to discuss the Histories of Violence conference.