French Program Student Association  
Friday May 2nd, 2014  
2:00-3:30 p.m.  
Room 5489  
Minutes

Present: Allison Faris (by proxy), Mariana Goycochea, Phillip Griffith, Parfait Koucoua, Amy Martin, Antoinette Williams-Tutt (by proxy), Tim Wilson

MG calls the meeting to order at 2:17 pm.

I. Approval of Agenda  
   ● PG motions to approve the agenda, PK seconds; passes unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes from March 3, 2014  
   ● MG motions to approve the minutes from March 3, 2014, PG seconds; passes unanimously.

III. Old Business  
   a. Course Evaluation Form  
      ● AM notes that there still seems to be interest in changing the scales/metrics, but no one has proposed a document.  
      ● MG says that she would be interested in revising the document, based on the suggestions made at the previous FPSA meeting.  
   TW enters at 2:23 pm  
      ● MG will share with the group for editing before the next FPSA meeting in the fall.
   b. Revising Century Structure  
      ● TW reports that Professor Sautman wants to start a Wordpress site for students and faculty to work together on this project. She is interested in creating some sort of flow in curriculum, from course to course, century to century. TW suggests creating themes for students to carry through their courses.
   c. First-Exam Internal Review  
      ● PG reports that the French EO, Dr. Przybos, wrote an assessment based on our survey/suggestions. This was or will be presented to the Provost's office. PG reads an excerpt from the assessment/report:
        “Assessment Results and Discussion  
        With the exception of two questions (3 and 7), students’ assessment of the first examination experience is overall positive and in some instances very positive (Question N0. 1 “How fair an assessment was the First Exam in terms of the material covered in the first-year courses?” and Question N0. 4 “After the two
Techniques of Literary research sections of the First Exam, did you feel you had a strong grounding in the field of literary research, criticism, and theory?”). Question N0. 3 “After the Problems in Literary History: The Novel” section of the First Exam, did you feel you had a strong understanding of the history of the novel in French?” reveals the differences between the course’s goals and students’ expectations. The course is not a comprehensive history of the novel in French but has been designed to alert and sensitize students to the problems that arise when we think of the novel as a literary genre. This discrepancy between teaching goals and students’ expectations needs to be discussed within the program.

Responses to question N0. 7 reveal an issue that should be discussed within the French Program as a whole. Question N0. 7 reads as follows: “Overall, please rate your experience with the First Exam with respect to your academic training. If you have completed both the Second and First Exams, please characterize the relationship between the two with respect to your academic training (e.g. The First and Second Exams are equally beneficial. The Second Exam is more beneficial than the First. Neither is beneficial, etc.). Please elaborate where you can.” This question solicited more comments than other questions of the survey. One comment in particular seems to grasp problems that students are facing in our program: “The jump for (sic) First to Second exam is big. The first examination process do not prepare for this. We pass from total dependency to total independence with a reading list that professors probably do not check every semester.” The Ph.D. Program in French is aware of the need to review and update, with the input from students, of our reading list and is currently putting in place a mechanism specifically designed to do it. We also need to think about the ways to make the “jump” from First Exam to Second Exam more manageable and academically sound.

● TW notes that he had a different understanding of what qualified for the first exam (coursework).
● AM says that we should verify the handbook and the website.
● MG notes that the 2009 version of the handbook is on the site.
● AM reminds the group that minor changes were made to the handbook in spring 2013, so then the newest version of the handbook should be added to the website.
● PK reads the guidelines for the first exam which designate the final exams for the first-year required courses (two on theory, one on the novel).

IV. New Business

a. Vote on Proposed Bylaw Changes (presented on 3 March)
   ● AM motions to make changes; PG seconds; passes unanimously

b. Bonus Program Allocation from DSC ($300)
   ● AM reports that we have only spent our DSC allocation on wine (just over $200)
   ● PG notes that Marguerite’s banner and prints/frames would cost around $90 and
$50-70 respectively.

- AM reports Allison said that we didn't have to use the DSC allocation for the conference, which means we should have $325 after spending on the lounge.
- MG asks about the Kneller library.
- PG responds that he hasn't heard from John Sorrentino about making a book donation. We could use any kind of books for the library.
- MG asks about a couch.
- AM responds that the EO needs to email facilities to get a new couch.
- TW asks if we could put aside the money for student travel purposes.
- AM will ask if money could be donated (then we could donate to Henri Peyre). The other option would be a visa gift card up to 25% of our yearly allocation.
- AM motions to allocate all remaining funds to student travel, PG seconds; passes unanimously.

**c. Vote on proposed designs (Marguerite's) for lounge redecoration**

- PG reports that we have Marguerite Van Cook’s designs for banners to vote on today, but that the prints aren't available yet. There are multiple options that Marguerite created. (shares styles).
- PG motions to request Marguerite to combine two designs discussed (blue border with font and format from the logo banner), MG seconds; passes unanimously.

V. **Reports**

**a. Elections Committee Representative**

- PG reports that elections went smoothly; all seats were filled.
- AM notes that the Alumni relations ad-hoc committee will start in the fall.
- TW asks that the committee keep in mind that we want to have alumni who aren't in academia on our alumni profile page. We also need to make sure that all current students have updated profiles on the site.

**b. Student Conference Committee**

- AM notes that no one is present, but that the event seemed to go very well, based on her attendance and the word from many other students in the program.
- TW reminds the group that Chris Brandon created a shared document outlining the work to be done when organizing a conference that should be shared with future organizers.

**c. Curriculum and Exams Committee Representative**

- AM reports that they probably haven’t met since our last meeting.

**d. Ad-hoc Committee for French Students’ Lounge Beautification**

- PG notes that he made his updates in new business.

**e. Admissions Committee**

- PG reports that we have granted all four fellowships for next year.
AM reports the new students for next year: Patrick Brown, Saiful Saleem, Angélique Aristondo and Nathalie Tur.

f. Executive Committee
- PG reports that the EO wants to set up mock interviews in the fall.
- TW notes that the theatre program does their mock interviews in front of an audience.
- PG notes that the EO was also interested in a panel of former students and professors to discuss their job search experiences.
- TW remarks that this would take some dedicated people to organize, and possibly funding for the travel of recent alumni.
- PG asks if there are more professional development events of interest.
- MG asks for grant writing workshops.
- TW asks for abstract writing for conferences.
- PG reports that the EO thought we might put a section on the website for dissertations in progress, but mentions the major concern of dissertation theft.
- AM notes that our work is already listed in our bios, where we could also list links to our websites with additional information about dissertations.

g. DSC Representative
- AM reports that the GC will have fellowship deferral and parental leave policies in the fall. (students can apply through the Student Affairs office)
- AM reports that CUNY library loan periods have gone up for doctoral students and faculty, from six to eight weeks, with unlimited renewals (unless a certain CUNY campus has a different policy about renewals).
- AM notes that she was at the Task Force on Library Space meeting, in which there was discussion about the future of the library. There will be some short- and some long-term projects, including possibly making the 2nd floor window areas more usable, and bringing technological offices/centers to the library.

h. Kneller Library report
- PG notes that there’s nothing new to report.

i. Student Workshop Committee (Goal-setting Group)
- TW reports that this group somehow “died” this semester. The work put in to the big 20th century Money conference and the Program conference may have been a cause. But hopefully the group will pick up again during the summer.
- MG reports that Ashley Williard is thinking of creating an archive of Glissant's work at the GC/ in NYC and would like to put together a student group.
- PG suggests that this be discussed over the summer months and we will reconsider whether it should be an official part of the PFSA (ad-hoc committee, for example) in the fall if that is of interest to those working on the project.

VI. Announcements
• PG reminds the group that we will be voting on the conference committee ideas in the fall. We need to send out an email reminding students to consider ideas over the summer. Do we want people to submit a fully drafted CFP, a title, or just their names?
• MG suggests that we ask for something in between title and CFP. Perhaps a shorter description of the proposed theme.
• TW suggests that we not ask, as happened in the past for proposed key-note speakers.
• PG suggests that we ask for a name (names) and a short description of the conference idea.
• AM suggests that we send Chris's outline/guidelines in the email to students so they know what the work involves.

VII. Adjournment
• AM motions to adjourn, PK seconds; passes unanimously.

The meeting ends at 3:45 pm.
Minutes submitted by Amy Martin