

Minutes of GGSA Meetings - Spring/Fall 2009

GGSA meeting - 10/05/2009

This week's GGSA meeting was well attended with a few 1st year students taking interest and joining us at the weekly meeting. The attendees were Lauren, Zofia, Drew, Dustin Kendra, Onur, Marvin, Kristin, Sachyn, Rajdeep and John. The meeting was opened by Lauren who pointed out that the GGSA will act as a medium to channel student concerns to the department and that the students' could bring up any issues before the GGSA, so that they are duly addressed.

The meeting addressed issues regarding funding opportunities for graduate students events (presented by Marvin); report by Drew from the departmental meeting; and other issues like the possibility of a survey monkey and organizing the UDIRT.

Marvin has found out that there are no options available to fund any graduate students' events. He brought this issue at the UD Graduate Students' Senate and was told that there is not much interest from the other senators for having such a fund, as it would mean that all the graduate students' would then have to pay an additional fee every semester. So, Marvin proposed that he will explore avenues to bring this issue to the attention of the Board of Trustees.

Drew reported on the departmental meeting which was held on October 5th and said that the department was planning to take steps to do away with the comprehensive exams, as they are held now, and instead come up with a more rigorous qualifying exams for the incoming graduate students. This also means that the current graduate students in the department will not be affected by the proposed changes and they will be subject to the existing policy. Drew also mentioned that the department is seeking to improve the manner in which the students approach their research design for the dissertation project. In addition to this, the department intends to admit students for the Master's program and then evaluate the students at the end of the second year, before they are admitted for the PhD program. The department had also discussed the question of the credit requirements, which stands at 62 for the PhD program currently, as they might reduce it to 59 credits as there is a gap of 3 credits unaddressed in the graduate handbook.

We also mentioned to the first year students that there is an avenue to submit working paper series that is currently handled by Juliette and Nick Galasso. As for the survey monkey, Sachyn said that he would explore to see how we could get a tool to conduct a survey, if there are any common questions of concern. Lastly, we decided to dip into the existing reserves to buy some pizza for the UDIRT to be organized on October 23rd which will look at the "Intersection between IR and CP".

GGSA Meeting 9/15/09

The GGSA met for the first time this Fall semester on September 15th, where we assessed the GGSA meeting held with Professor Bauer on September 11 and also addressed other issues. The summary of the meeting with Prof. Bauer is as follows:

Prof. Bauer met with the members of GGSA to touch base with the organization at the start of the year. She made a suggestion that the GGSA should have at least one student from the 1st year to the 4th year, so that it would be representative and all the students can air their concerns through their cohort representatives. She addressed the issue of students taking an independent study, clarified the purpose of an independent study - which is that a student should avail of this opportunity only if the student feels the necessity of addressing a particular topic surrounding his/her research agenda and if they feel that they haven't done a course relating to that topic. Therefore, an independent study should be designed in such a manner where they can engage with a particular literature, in-depth, with a professor who can guide them in that regard.

If there are many students who would like to do a particular class/topic, which is not offered as part of the course listings then they should contact the department in advance. For example, if some students are interested in a class in the Spring semester, then they should contact the department in the first two weeks of the Fall semester, so that the department can plan accordingly. GGSA brought to her attention that there is a demand for classes on IPE, Migration and Critical Theories in IR.

Some housekeeping issues that Prof. Bauer addressed included keeping the office space in 333 Smith Hall clean and also keeping the keys to the office space safely. She pointed out that students' should not lend their key to others and that a student who loses their key to the office will not be issued another key.

Lastly, she suggested that the GGSA should look for funding sources on campus while organizing events like UDIRT, which was followed upon by Zofia who found that there are sources of funding from the University Student Center and GGSA will be aiming to utilize this avenue when organizing the UDIRT this Fall semester.

The other issues addressed by GGSA on September 15th are about organizing UDIRT; social events; Sachyn's idea on having a GG Google Group; survey monkey; representation in GGSA; GGSA meeting time and screening movies in the dept.

The GGSA has decided to organize two UDIRT discussions this semester and the dates for the same are Friday, 23rd October and Friday, 20th November at 1:30 - 3:30pm. The topics for the UDIRT haven't been decided yet and we would like any feedback from the students who want a particular topic to be discussed. Lauren Balasco and Rajdeep Pakanati have volunteered to lead the first UDIRT, while Ryan will lead the second UDIRT. GGSA would welcome others to take the lead in organizing the UDIRT and would encourage everyone to suggest some ideas for the UDIRT and also take a lead in organizing the discussions.

The social events that GGSA has in mind is coordinating the students' plan to attend the Oktoberfest in Newark and organizing a get together in Kildaire's after the departmental reception on September 25th. As for Sachyn's idea of a GG group we think it would be a nice forum for the students to discuss issues and act as a general forum.

The purpose of the survey monkey is to solicit opinions of the students' if there is a pressing question that could be addressed by the department. Any ideas in this regard would be welcome from all the students. As for the representation in GGSA, we endorse Prof. Bauer's suggestion that there should be representation from all years and would encourage students to come forward and join the GGSA. Considering that the schedules of the students we have decided to have the GGSA meeting every Thursday @ 5:30pm in Deer Park.

Lastly, the idea of screening movies in the grad office is to bring together the students from the department, possibly on weekends, so that we can watch some interesting movies by playing them on the computer and projecting them on the screen in the computer lab in 333 Smith Hall.

GGSA Minutes – April 9, 2009

The third GGSA meeting started as usual by approving the minutes of the last meeting. The meeting was also attended by Juliette Tolay, the mentorship coordinator in the last year, who is now part of the Editorial Review Board for the GG Working Paper series. At this meeting we discussed the issues regarding the working paper series, and picked up from where we left last week regarding the UDIRT, East Africa Awareness program, the US & the World Conference, end of year social event and the mentorship program. In addition to this we also considered Tony Riviera's suggestions regarding UDIRT and "Policy Watch".

Juliette filled us in on the GG Working Paper series, which has so far received a few papers that have been passed on to the reviewers. The idea is to put together the working papers' by September 1, before the Fall semester starts. She also informed us that the editorial board considered printing the papers, which has been put on hold until we find some means of raising funds. The GGSA suggested working with the editorial board to organize a fundraiser (no plan yet) around the working paper series. Juliette also suggested that a working paper series could be designed on a particular theme, say arising from a particular class, and having another set of papers in Spring if possible.

We discussed how to organize the UDIRT, which is scheduled for the 29th April, with the theme being on feminist and colonial approaches to IR. As for our involvement in the US & the World Conference, the GGSA will work with the organizers in ferrying the speakers and being available at the event location for the participants. Zofia has informed the committee that she has been in touch with Prof. Green to get in touch with the incoming batch of students. She is to follow-up with Prof. Green in this regard.

Lastly, we considered the suggestions made by Tony regarding the UDIRT, wherein he suggested for a *critical voice* to be considered in the UDIRT forum. This is a good suggestion, and the upcoming UDIRT does revolve around this theme. His suggestion regarding a Policy Watch, wherein he wants the students to contribute news regarding events around the world, and tie them into the research that we are undertaking. This could be done in the form of a E-Newsletter, but it was suggested that we could have a blog, with access provided to all the students and faculty in the department. This will be considered further in the next meeting.

March 26, 2009

The second meeting started by approving the minutes of the last meeting and laying out the issues that were to be addressed that day - America & World Conference involvement; East Africa Awareness program involvement; mentoring program; UDIRT; and a End of Year Social Event.

Regarding the America and World Conference, the committee recognized that we should send a reminder as the day for the conference approaches, as the students in the department have already been sent the information. As for involving with the East Africa Awareness conference, we thought that we should explore the possibility of making an announcement at the UD Global talks, conducted by Prof. Ralph Begleiter as our department is involved with the program as one of the sponsors. We also discussed if we should have a stall at the event where we could be available to students planning for further studies, like grad school or any other related concerns. Lauren would be contacting the event organizer and inquire if we should have a stall set up at the event.

The committee looked at the mentoring program and suggested that we could make it more effective by trying to contact the incoming students who have all been made an offer to join the program. In this manner, we could send them a signal that we are keen to have them in our department. In this regard, Zofia would seek the contacts of the students who have been sent an offer, so that we can reach to them at the earliest. We also decided that we should provide the incoming students with syllabi and other information during the summer, so that they could come to school in the Fall with a better idea of the classes on offer. The mentorship program will also seek to match the students' interest closely so that the mentor-mentee can engage better.

The committee plans to organize at least one UDIRT session this semester, scheduled for April 29th, which will be planned by Drew/Lauren and a professor from the department to organize the session. The suggested readings will be decided and distributed at the earliest, with suggested areas to be covered are: feminist theories of IR, critical theories or post-colonial theories in IR. The idea is to have a student and a professor chair together, so that we could have a productive discussion. Once we decide the topic we will book a room and notify everyone.

Lastly, the committee considered the idea of having a End of Year Social Event, which could be scheduled for May 29th. We considered having a gathering with the professors and the students in an outdoors location, possibly like a lunch/snack picnic; followed by a gathering in the evening with drinks et al.

GGSA Meeting
March 19, 2009

I. Welcome - The first GGSA meeting with the new committee was held on March 19th, 2009 @ Deer Park. Henceforth, the GGSA would be meeting on Thursdays @ 5PM in Deer Park. The decisions at the meeting shall be taken by consensus, with provision for any dissenting voices by the committee members. In addition to this, the committee will open up the forum for any input given by any student from the department.

II. Suggested Agenda Items

- a. Comparison to other political science associations
 - b. Internal Structure/Format of the Meeting - Quorum, approval of minutes etc.
 - c. Responsibilities and Expectations of Officers - Increase involvement rule
 - d. Communication - Survey Monkey, Posting information on the Website, and Setting up an email
 - e. Departmental Involvement
 - f. University Promotion - Establishing ourselves on campus
 - g. Programs - UDIRT, Policy Committee, Mentorship Program and Other Activities
 - h. Funding - Member dues Fundraising, Involving Undergraduate students
 - i. Student concerns
- The committee addressed several questions regarding UDIRT, mentorship program, networking on campus and off campus, increasing involvement, raising funds for activities like speakers or social gatherings. The committee will seek to establish contact with the incoming prospective students, so that they can engage with them closely and strengthen the mentorship program.
 - As for organizing the UDIRT the committee discussed ways to involve the graduate and under-graduate students so that there could be productive suggestions. The suggested ideas were - to have a thematic oriented discussions. with a recommended reading list; request faculty members to suggest some readings that they have come across; or have a discussion based on latest issues of relevant academic journals like IO, ISQ, RIS, CPS, World Politics, etc.
 - Regarding the measures needed to increase the outreach of the GGSA, the committee discussed measures that need to be taken on campus and off-campus. The on-campus measures are - networking with other departmental graduate student associations in person (rather than email); using the UDIRT as a focal point to attract not only graduate students, but also the undergraduate students, who can be

made aware of the program by the TAs; and have some form of social gathering. The suggested off-campus measures could be - inviting speakers, and possibly some people attending ISA-NE meeting in Baltimore.

- The committee also addressed the question regarding TA assignments and would seek more information from the department, to address any concerns of the TAs.
- To increase the involvement of the students in the department in different activities, the committee suggested that the members encourage at least one person personally to be involved in various activities like UDIRT or GGSA meetings. In addition to this the committee seeks the involvement of at least one person from each cohort, so that they can then reach out to the other members. As mentioned earlier, the committee wants to tap into the TAs to encourage the undergrad students to participate in UDIRT.
- Lastly, the committee set the goal of achieving at least two UDIRT talks and to have a guest speaker by the end of Fall semester.

III. Set agenda for next week

IV. Other concerns
