DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Meeting of the Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting (SSLC)

Wednesday 29th October 2014
3-4pm
5B.324

Agenda

Attendees

Chair
Professor Hugh Ward

1st Year Representative
Rebecca Cordell

3rd Year Representative
Denise Laroze (by Skype)

4th Year Representative
Belen Gonzalez

Graduate Administrator
Alex West

Absent
2nd Year Representative
Linda Urselmans

For Discussion

Matters Arising

1. What is going well?

2. Improvements since last meeting

Rebecca: The induction process for first year PhD students has been very comprehensive and informative

Denise: The GTA Training this year was to a very high standard with an improvement on the year before

3. 1st Year Agenda Items

• Opportunities to gain work experience in research in the department

Hugh: There is no structured or institutional process for job opportunities due to lack of funding and resources. Mentioned that some students co-author with their supervisors or secure Frontrunner positions.

Belen: Most students work with their supervisors as Research Assistants where they have access to extra funds for such roles. Mentioned that you can email Alex West to be put on a list for
Research Assistants but it is important to ensure that any work you take up is relevant to your research.

Denise: Research positions do come up and are ad hoc usually in conjunction with your supervisor but take caution in taking on too much work alongside the PhD.

Action: Rebecca to feedback this information to fellow first year PhD students.

4. 2nd Year Agenda Items

Linda Urselmans had recently been ill and was absent from the meeting.

5. 3rd Year Agenda Items

- Research design of the PhD project

Denise: Wonders if it would be possible for third years to gain some advice/feedback on the research design of their project. Although GV994 is very helpful in this regard during the first year, by the time you get to third year your project has evolved greatly.

Hugh: Suggested that second and third years could take Thomas Plümper’s course in Research Design or talk directly to Thomas. Was reluctant to make GV994 anymore research design focused as not all students are doing empirical projects. Also highlighted that the First Year Defence gave opportunity for committee members to critique and give feedback on your research design.

Denise: Indicated that the feedback from past First Year Defence meetings were very short and brief.

Hugh: Assured everyone that the feedback would be more comprehensive from now on.

Belén: Recommended that the PhD Colloquium focused some of their seminars on research design with an opportunity to work on “bulletproofing” your project.

Action: Denise to approach the PhD colloquium committee about designating some of the seminar slot’s to research design.

- Preparation for post PhD life (Job opportunities, job talk prep, things to accomplish etc)

Denise: Although she had been proactive in preparing for post PhD life, Denise was concerned that her fellow third year PhD students required guidance on job opportunities, job talk preparation, things to accomplish in the third year. Wondered if the department could provide a general approach to these issues.

Hugh: There are some resource issues with providing a departmental seminar on such a topic. Moreover, a general approach may not be very helpful considering that each student has specific needs and different career aspirations for post PhD life.

Action: Hugh to take this issue away and discuss with the heads of department
6. 4th Year Agenda Items

Belén: Seeking general clarification on submitting the thesis procedures such as selecting internal and external examiners.

Hugh: There are rules on the University website. This is something that should be discussed between the student, the supervisor and the committee. The choice of an external examiner should ideally be someone who knows your project and could be linked to future job prospects

- Completion year handbook progress

Action: Belén to ask Alex West directly.

- Binding of Thesis – How many copies

Action: Hugh to find out and report back to the committee.

- Departmental help in cost of printing and binding

Belén: In the past the department had not helped in the cost of printing or binding.

Action: Hugh to find out what the procedure would be this year and report back to the committee.

7. Any other business

No comments