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## **Agenda of a Meeting of the History Graduate Student Committee January 20, 2017**

**Present:** Chris Marsh, Ceilidh Auger-Day, Karissa Patton, Dimitry Zakharov, Fedir Razumenko, David Kim-Cragg, John Bird, Krystl Raven, Courtney Tuck, Michael Lyons.

**Missing:** Davis Rogers, Tarisa Little.

**Guest presenters:** Matthew Neufeld, Renee Lepitzki, Corinne Steininger.

### **1. Presentation by Matthew Neufeld and colleagues re: 2016 TA pay situation**

NEUFELD: some students got overpaid in the fall, some of those students checked in about it and were right, but got told it was fine at the time

LEPITZKI: we were down a lot of staff: the director, the manager, 2 out of 4 financial staff – payroll wasn't getting done. No excuse, but to help you understand. Donalda got a position, was trying to get things cleaned up, I'm general financial and I was the one to email Krystl – I should have looked at the letter of offer and not what the EGS [computer financial system that can transmit the info to payroll] was saying, so what I told you [Krystl] was incorrect.

NEUFELD: what was entered into EGS was incorrect, so when Renee looked at the form, it told her the amount students were being paid was correct. Lesson for us as historians: our information is only as good as what the sources are saying. Just like we have sources to check sources, we have ways of checking pay.

STEININGER: We noticed that there were students with overpayments, but once things have gone to payroll, they go to the bank, and we can't at that point get the money back.

NEUFELD: The department will cover the overpayment to students, students will not have to pay back the overpayments. It seems to have affected the students on graduate teaching fellowships.

Remainder of Fall and Summer top-ups (\$91/month) will not go out to students, because it has already been forwarded out.

PATTON: If this is a labour issue for you (being understaffed) as well as for us, can we come to together on union issues around understaffing affecting students?

LEPITZKI: It's not really applicable, because we were fine -- until staff chose to move to another department, leaving us short.

NEUFELD: It is sort of related to the shuffles in August, of administrative staff moving positions, but people chose to jump in this case rather than being moved.

RAVEN: Michael contacted Donalda in September, it was not just Renee.

STEININGER: Again, it's because EGS was showing us the incorrect info, so she [Donalda] was working off that too.

RAVEN: What can we do to make sure this doesn't happen again.? Though hopefully it won't happen again with staff back.

STEININGER: Donaldda was also doing two positions, now it's just one, so she'll have more time to check things.

**Clarification of TA over-pay resolution:** Jan-April stays at the same pay amount, but students won't receive the top-up scholarship portion for the remainder of the year (\$91/month) because its already been paid out to those students.

RAZUMENKO: Is there a lump sum in April? You say yes, but it doesn't happen.

NEUFELD: Yes, you are not teaching but still getting the payment.

RAVEN: There is a vacation amount listed, but it's not lining up with what people are getting.

STEININGER: We should take that out if it's confusing.

STEININGER: All affected students [affected by fall overpayments] have been directly contacted by email -- if you haven't been, you weren't affected.

PATTON and MARSH: Staff and Matthew Neufeld have been pro-actively trying to figure this out, and so thank you!!

[Renee Lepizki and Corinne Steininger leave; Matthew Neufeld remains to talk about the MA Colloquium].

### **MA colloquium:**

NEUFELD: MA Colloquium is Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> – Angélique Tardivel has resigned her position, Michael Lyons has volunteered to step in and take over organizing the MA colloquium. There has been some confusion between Jenna and the HGSC re: catering for that event – that is now resolved, the department covers food costs. Maybe Michael, one of the first year MAs could help you organize this, so it's not all on you? [Suggestions are floated of a few people specifically Lyons could ask].

LYONS: I am happy to work with whoever. I have given preliminary thought to sessions and panels – I know the projects fairly well. I wanted to see what HGSC has organized so far.

MARSH: HSCG has booked the site – the GSA Commons – for a 9am start. From 8-9am we would have to pay for the space, before 9 am, i.e. business hours. Should we pay for that space for that hour for set up?

NEUFELD: Also please budget for 45 min at the end, after the closing remarks of the colloquium, for the investiture ceremony for the PhDs (Karissa Patton, possibly 3 others). Papers are 20 min, with 20 minutes for questions for the panel, 3 talks per session, so you are likely to need the whole 9-5 time period.

NEUFELD: Feel free to ask faculty to chair panels (go into their offices and ask in person, don't send an email).

LYONS: That will be easier than me doing it all...

NEUFELD: You could also have senior PhDs chair panels, but having faculty chair is a way to make sure faculty are there...

LYONS: Maybe have a mix.

Karissa Patton volunteers to chair a panel.

NEUFELD: I would rather not do the opening. I will be there all day, and could do closing and the transition to the investiture, as I will be doing the investiture.

MARSH: Michael, you should go to the Grad Commons office to meet with them regarding the timing we need, what we need there, etc. I sent the paperwork for the booking to Matthew Neufeld yesterday.

**Grad student offices and upcoming relocations:**

RAVEN: I had a conversation with Steven McLeod about students being moved to new offices, he asked what we wanted -- I said we like our offices. They are mostly moving people from areas that don't apply to us -- students who will have better space in the new place. That email from Nadine regarding moving caused the first rumblings.

MARSH: There are rumblings about renovations in MacLean Hall -- it may just be portions recently moved out of by science outreach, etc.

Students are worried about rumblings and rumours. Steven McLeod is not checking in directly and this makes students nervous. Other students in other departments are clearly happy about this communal space, it's a big step up for them -- they are currently in carrels, with no locker space, and were looking to get into the new space (philosophy, etc).

It's just that the emails regarding the new space from Steven McLeod are the only communication we are getting -- its making us nervous because there has been a shift from "who wants to move," to "these people have to move," to "your old offices are closing on this date"...all without consultation or voice, so the uncertainty and possibility that we might later be affected -- that is what is making students unhappy.

PATTON: I emailed with concerns for history students, but I did not get any response.

RAVEN: The offices in MacLean are important and have a lot to offer, to lose that just to go to Arts, no thank you. I told Steven McLeod this.

PATTON: Even faculty and the department have not been informed, and don't know what is happening to their student spaces.

**Core issue:** lack of consultation, no idea what future shifts might be (they obviously have a bigger future plan, but what is it?)

**Action:** A letter to Steven McLeod on behalf of all history students, or on behalf of HGSC, with signatures of the committee. Karissa Patton and Krystl Raven volunteer to work together to draft a letter.

[Matthew Neufeld has slipped out during this conversation, Krystl Raven has to leave].

**Update on DuBois Public Faculty lecture:**

PATTON: There is no update yet because no one has volunteered... Fedir has emailed faculty twice.

RAZUMENKO: There was no response to either email circulated by Nadine.

Suggestion to approach faculty in person.

[Patton given several other suggestions to try]

**Fedir Razumenko's report on December faculty meeting:**

--discussion of student office relocations, lots of confusion among faculty too.

--mostly the talk was about the holidays

--discussion of Rampolla guide: it was not included by all profs as *required* readings in all courses, so there was a shortage in the bookstore (because the bookstore doesn't stock recommended books, only required ones). Faculty reiterated putting it on the required list for all history courses.

-- spring/summer courses: grad students offered chance to teach (the Feb.1<sup>st</sup> deadline to indicate willingness changed to Jan.20 because the schedule had to be fixed earlier). Classes are mostly 200 level courses, intensive 3-week format.

-- (5) applications for SSHRC were forwarded to the national competition from the history department

-- Keith Carlson got a synthesis grant, which is a new grant; his students will have more chances to do research and he will be able to take more students in future.

**Fedir Razumenko is outgoing faculty liaison – Karissa Patton is incoming HGSC faculty liaison, and has now assumed responsibility (as of Jan.1 2017).**

**Karissa Patton's report on January faculty meeting:**

--3 new MAs incoming this September

--Faculty deciding this month on new PhDs

--There has been a strategic initiative by the university – a call by the college for any aboriginal scholars, at all level, in any topic (any level of professor, administrator). It has caused some controversy (scientists complaining because there are “not too many aboriginal physicists”). Also some question around whether departments are going to hire internally from among their own grads (via a post-doc elsewhere so it looks better).

--In regards to the provincial government's potential cuts to post-secondary education, those cuts will likely go through. The department has been putting money into reserves for the last while, goes to pay a sessional if professor gets sick, to start new initiatives, serves as reserve or emergency fund, etc. The provincial government is using this as reason not to give increases, and possibly to make cuts (that the department already has some money available). So now departments are being told to spend this money. The history depart must spend \$200,000 over the next 3 years. Ideas included:

- Erika Dyck asked if it could go to scholarship for grad students – was told no, because it would be short term and not renewable, and could have implications for students coming in in future (the college sees the department as having money but it has run out).
- Launch a stream in the MA program on public history – this was the most discussed option for the money.
- Holding a symposium
- Putting money into journals in the department, or bringing over the Saskatchewan History journal to the department (it is currently going under financially)
- Doing a pod cast – though this idea was considered unfeasible by others\
- The department wants something that will have positive effect even after money is gone...

--Department is changing teaching fellowships from teaching upper level to teaching 200-level courses. This is because students offering 400 levels are not getting enough students (fewer students to apply, as only history majors are generally taking 400s, and by that time the students know the profs they like and take those courses). Professors were asked to give up 200 levels to teach a 400 level instead, only one has volunteered so far (the course is pre-confederation Canada). Karissa Patton's concern around this is that 200-levels are less specific topics, mostly nation based. More students likely to register, but the type of course is limiting in terms of which students the topics available actually work for. Right now students get to design their own course based on their research area. Fedir Razumenko responds: the average enrollment for (grad taught) 400-levels is less than 10 students, that's not great for anyone. Michael Lyons responding

to Karissa's concern: I can see the History Matters approach shifting to include also the second levels, moving away from nation to thematic.

**Dimitry Zakharov's GSA update:**

--The GSA wants student input on an agreement [Dimitry will send it out to the HGSC via Krystl]. The agreement is a contract between students and supervisors, a contract of simple rules around communications and other issues to help make those relationships better. The GSA wants feedback for February (no hard date). Send an email with feedback to the GSA president.

-- The GSA is being audited by an outside firm because the governing body before this one didn't keep any [financial] records. So we have no idea of money missing, or who will be held liable, etc. The executive has emphasized that none of them were around at that time, but current people in those positions could be held liable, because responsibility goes with the position. There is insurance in place for them.

**Book Pub Update:**

MARSH: Books have been moved from the Canadian Journal of History to Michael Lyon's office. There are a lot of books there...

LYONS: There are two people in six desks in my office – you can't see the other four desks for books. We need a better system of storage. Many of them are old textbooks, they are not going to sell.

MARSH: Can we even get rid of them this year? We used to have a relationship with a secondhand bookstore that took the leftovers, but they no longer want them. Just moving them from McLean to the GSA was huge, we need to get them cut down.

ZAKHAROV: Recycle them!

TUCK: Divide them up and see if the library or the symphony or any rural libraries or value village or village green or correctional facilities might want some of them...

TUCK: I am willing to follow up with the symphony and rural library systems re: donation policies

LYONS: I can follow up with correctional facilities donation policy

AUGER-DAY: Books also need to come out of Erin Spinney's office before she moves

MARSH: I will get in touch with her and take care of that.

**Signing Authority:**

AUGER-DAY: What about moving signing authority to someone else to replace Angelique?

MARSH: I will look at the HGSC constitution. Can it be a 2<sup>nd</sup> year MA?

LYONS: I am willing to do colloquium organizing, but I don't want to sit in the VP position.

**Agenda for next meeting:**

--Book pub and dealing with books

--Replacing VP

--Meeting to be held before reading break in February, Chris Marsh to confirm a date.