

Mentoring Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, 5 November 2007

Attending: Kevin Speer, Craig Rudick, Penny Roufs, Marjorie Montanez-Wiscovich, Adam Bradley, Matthew Schiefer, and Sarah Kyker

10:07 – Introduction of Committee Members to Each Other

There was notably an absence of a representative from the Arts/Humanities.

10:08 – Appointment of a Committee Chair

A chair for the Mentoring Committee is needed. Craig Rudick was suggested as the best possibility to be the chair. He accepted the nomination and was unanimously voted in as the new chair.

10:09 – Committee's Charge

Because mentoring is a vital part of graduate school and the GSS has an obligation to enhance the graduate student experience at CWRU, the charge of this committee is to increase the quantity of good mentors and the overall quality of mentors at this university.

➤ How do we get this done?

1. Graduate Student Handbook

- This is the quickest thing for us to get done.
- The University of Michigan's handbook is the best model for us
 - It is easy to read and has a checklist for mentors at the end
 - It was designed for a large public university
- We need to gear our handbook toward a small private university
 - Because of some of the problems that arise at private institutions from funding, we could include available graduate student funding resources in the handbook
- Our handbook should focus on graduate students, not professional students
- We should also address different styles of mentoring that come with different areas of study (e.g., arts vs. science).
 - This is why it is very important to have a representative on our committee from the Arts/Humanities.
- We should consider creating a student handbook along with the faculty handbook.
 - This could help address how senior students mentor junior students.

2. Seminar and/or Power Point Slides

- There are pre-packaged slides available from other universities.
- Our university already has an optional course on mentoring/communication.
- If we create a required course there are some problems that might arise.

- A required course could make the university less competitive at getting star faculty.
- Also, such a seminar may not be effective if it is included with the many other orientations that are required for new faculty.
- In order to reconcile these problems, we have to get exemplary faculty on board to help lead such a seminar.
 - We have to be aware that we may be taking a shot to the gut at first until the faculty's mind set warms up to this idea.

3. Bill of Rights

- A graduate student bill of rights is something that could be included in the handbook, either as the preface or as an appendix.

10:39 – Getting People Involved

President Snyder, the Board of Trustees, and the GSS are all on board with this idea.

10:40 – What to Do Now

1. Read graduate student handbooks.

- We could perform some data mining on handbooks that are already available.

2. Perform surveys and data collection at CWRU.

- Two surveys are needed.
 - The initial survey will poll graduate students to determine if there are problems with mentorship and, if so, what these problems are. This survey, in other words, will determine whether the efforts of the Mentoring Committee are needed at CWRU.
 - This survey should be short.
 - No comment sections to divert attention.
 - Multiple choice would be easier to interpret.
 - Omit the word “mentor” from survey questions, as it can be confusing.
 - The second survey will encompass longer term data collection and assess on-going accountability that will be included in the handbook.
- OSU has a survey that Kevin tried to get his hands on and will continue to try to get.
- Our surveys could be constructed through Flier where general statistics are provided.

3. At our next meeting, delegate responsibilities.

- Different groups of people could work on different aspects of the handbook and bill of rights.
- We could build these through the CWRU Wiki where everyone can access the document and make detectable changes.

11:13 – Conclusion and Responsibilities

In the next two weeks, we must all read the available handouts that Kevin has provided for us and brainstorm some questions for an initial survey.

1. Read the Handbooks

- Kevin has provided everyone with three handbooks and a questionnaire to document our opinions.
 - University of Michigan (especially read this one!)
 - University of Washington
 - University of New Hampshire
- Go through the mental exercise of reading the handbooks and recording our opinions to get everyone up to the same level of research.
- **Develop survey questions.**
 - Send all questions to Craig at craig.rudick@cwru.edu.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Communicate with students in the Arts/Humanities to get a representative on the committee (Penny and Craig will work on this).
 - Determine a username and password for our Wiki and talk to Jennifer Talley about posting a link on the GSS webpage to this Wiki.
 - Talk to Dean Rozek to get a hard, fast date that we need to have the handbook completed by.
- **Have a one hour meeting in two weeks to go over survey questions and other developments.**
 - Monday morning meetings don't work for everyone, so we may have to change the meeting time.
 - Sarah and Brett are both off campus and may need to join meetings via conference call.