

Graduate Students' Report
Submitted to: SSSP Board of Directors
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Graduate Students' Meeting

3 students (excluding myself) attended the graduate students' meeting. Significantly fewer students participated this year than last year, according to Naomi's 2007 report. The meeting took place in a remote part of the fourth floor and started late due to the fact that no one was in the room. In addition, the particular room that it was in seemed unfinished – curtains from the windows were only partially hung and the tables and chairs were not set up properly. I partially take responsibility for the low attendance – it was suggested that I make a flyer to send to graduate students. However, due to time constraints and unfamiliarity with programs to make flyers (e.g., Microsoft Publisher), I was unable to do so.

Topics for discussion at the meeting included:

- a) Student concerns/experiences – All expressed concern about the high prices for accommodations. Students recommended that SSSP give alternative options for housing, much like ASA.
- b) Travel grant – None of the persons received a travel grant and all seemed fine with the Board's recommendation to provide documentation. The students also felt that giving the award out after attending would in theory be the best solution to people taking advantage of the honor system.
- c) Communication – All were shocked to find out that there are more ways than just presenting that students can become involved in the organization. They recommended some kind of graduate corner (or perhaps division) that is tailored to student interest. They also brought up the fact that they were not aware of (and/or not on) any graduate student listserv. Having a special section may help ameliorate some of the issues discussed, and it would most likely keep students engaged in the organization by making them feel as though they are apart of something other than their substantive area of interest.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that people are invited to join the listserv more than once a year. It seems timely to invite people after each meeting and also with an updated list after the preliminary program is announced and about a month or two before each meeting. This ensures that listserv posts are getting to active SSSP members.
2. Create a list of affordable housing alternatives to students for subsequent conferences.
3. Continue dialogue of a special division or section that is geared toward increasing communication and networking among graduate students.

Graduate Students' Social

The social was held at MJ O'Connor's Irish pub in the hotel this year directly after our meeting. It was not well attended (7 total, excluding myself) but because of the intimacy, people seemed to use the time to discuss other graduate student issues (outside of SSSP) and create linkages and networks. I (as well as Michele) informed the bar that I was the point person for the event and not to serve anything until I was able to "check in". We were budgeted \$700 with a \$250 deposit given to the bar. We were unable to meet the \$250 threshold.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to host the social in a pub (close to the hotel).
2. Continue this tradition of the graduate student contacting the bar so that the bar knows not to serve people until the contact person arrives.
3. Create a small break in between the social and graduate student reception so that people are able to return to the hotel in an efficient manner.