

IPSS Steering Committee Meeting

04.11.19

Attendees: Jason Unrine, Alan Fryar, Abbie Cain, Mark Coyne, Lucas Araujo, Carrie Knott, Katherine Rod, Bruce Downie

I. Admission Update

- a. 14 applied, 8 accepted, minimum of 2 will be enrolled – pretty average for the program
- b. Applicants have until August 1st to decide
- c. Students have until April 15th to make a decision on funded positions

II. Symposium/PLS 772 Change

- a. No changes to actual course description – only syllabus change
- b. One symposium during the winter intersession right before the Spring semester starts
- c. Students enrolled in PLS 772 will organize the symposium, present during the course in Fall for their grade. They will have the options to serve as a moderator and/or present their project from the Fall course at the symposium.
- d. The course could be taught in the final 8 weeks of the Fall term.
- e. Currently, Art is the Spring instructor and Mark is the Fall instructor. Going forward PLS 772 will only be offered in the Fall term with the symposium coordinator as the instructor.
- f. Annual presentation requirement can be met by: symposium, exit seminar, other symposium on-campus
 - i. Must be a presentation on-campus that is open to the public
 - ii. 3MT will remain with GSA and not count
- g. How will the symposium title and funding be changed with moving to once per year?
- h. Where will symposium take place?
 - i. Good Barn – posters and food
 - ii. Cameron Williams – presentations

III. Budget Items

- a. With the Spring symposium awards, the block funding budget for this year is spent
- b. About 50% of eligible students received travel funding – everyone who applied received some level of funding
- c. More than half of the students received some sort of supplement for presentations, society awards, competitions, etc.
- d. Mark will budget more money toward the travel award next year
 - i. This will allow Mark to fund students at more than one meeting per year
 - ii. Money will be moved from lines in the application fee waiver, video, society or publication awards

IV. Standard Admission Process Letter Templates

- a. No information packet is currently sent out with successful admission letters
 - i. Could we attach the student handbook? Need to continue cleaning up
 - ii. Annual reports must be submitted prior to April 12th to notify students of continued assistantship funding
- b. There is a template for rejection due to not meeting initial criteria
- c. Add a line to the interest letter – “This does not mean that you will not be considered for other areas”

- d. There is a line in the PhD letter about the “initial advisor” but not in the Master’s – what does this mean? Do students typically arrive and change their advisor?
 - i. Occasionally, but this line should be removed
 - e. Rejection letter includes clarifying information on why they were not accepted
 - f. Website
 - i. Add an interest form to the website that sends info to all faculty
 - ii. Steps on how to apply, include dates
 - iii. Who to contact about what (i.e. harassment, advisor issues, etc.)
 - g. Orientation will be Thursday or Friday the week before
- V. Meeting in May
- a. Draft proposals for new environmental science disciplinary area
- VI. Evaluation of Advisors
- a. Anonymity is a concern
 - b. Exit survey provides mechanism for program feedback
 - c. Rebecca McCulley and Mark Williams meet with new students upon entry to create a relationship to provide feedback on major concerns
 - d. GSA is looking for a method to improve relationships between students and advisors
 - i. Concern is quality of advising
 - e. Bring in committee members to help advise through situations
 - f. Front-end education for incoming students
 - i. GSA resource handbook