

SURVEY RESULTS: LISTENING SESSION

AAD Student/Faculty Discussion

March 2015

Categorized Student Concerns:

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COURSE:

Concern summary: *A number of students have reached out to SAG Representatives to share their frustrations regarding Financial Management this term. They feel the instructor has been inconsistent, unresponsive to feedback and unable to deliver material in a way that allows students to succeed.*

Proposed Solutions:

- Financial Management course grades could be turned into a Pass/No Pass, or all students given a Pass for the term.
- In the future, instructors for core graduate curriculum could be vetted more thoroughly, and if newer instructors are hired, they could be paired with an Associate or Assistant Professor.

FACULTY TRANSITION:

Concern summary: *A number of students noted on the SAG Survey (detailed below) and through personal contact with SAG Representatives at meetings about the ways in which the faculty transition this year has affected their AAD experience. For some, it has meant added stress, for others, confusion on advising policies, and many are still confused about the future of Museum Studies and Community Arts.*

Proposed Solutions:

- Provide information to first year students, especially those interested in museum studies, about the transition process for academic and research advising from the new faculty member. How will this be communicated? What will be the process for connecting students to the new faculty member? When will students receive assistance and guidance from the new faculty member? If there is a gap in time during which the new faculty member is not available to advise, who will advise and how will they provide support to students? How will there be a smooth transition, so that the new faculty member is aware of students' current interests in research, professional development, and academic pursuits?
- Immediately create more transparency regarding the future of Community Arts at UO.
- Provide more information about the role of research advisors, the selection process, and especially the procedures of changing research advisors. How often should advisors meet with their students? If students (or faculty members) believe that the current advisor is no longer a suitable fit for the student, what is the process for changing advisors? How is this communicated to the current and future advisor, so that the transition is smooth?

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- Students would benefit from recognition that this has been a difficult year for many 2nd years- sometimes recognition can go a long way.

FEEDBACK:

Concern summary: *Some students have noted that they aren't receiving the feedback they want or need -on papers, projects and during research.*

Proposed Solutions:

- Both faculty and students are interested in receiving feedback, and students are often hesitant to give feedback, even anonymously. Perhaps a new feedback system can be put in place. This would differ between classes and professors, but it may be something that students could offer input on at the beginning of each new class.
- It has become clear that students are unsure who to talk to or where to find them if they have a comment or concern. A clear system should be set up immediately. Perhaps it would be a good idea to have a "comment box" sitting somewhere (or online) that is checked by a SAG representative and shared with a particular faculty member.
- Faculty could be more verbal about best places to meet and discuss student questions, if that is not during office hours.

RIGOR:

Concern summary: *Some students have noted that the grading is inconsistent or too lenient for graduate coursework and that expectations from faculty are unclear.*

Proposed Solutions:

- Uphold academic standards, high expectations, and challenges for graduate students, including fairness of grading - rewarding thoughtful work, not rewarding for simply trying. How is graduate work graded? How can students receive feedback from assignments in order to improve their work and knowledge of topics?
- Students working on group projects could be graded individually, rather than as a group to help alleviate some of the burden on those students who always do a disproportionate amount of work.
- The addition of more skills (rather than theory) related projects to some core classes may be possible, and can help meet the concern that students aren't getting enough of the "hard skills" they entered grad school for (grant writing, fundraising, etc).

POLICIES:

Concern summary: *Students are unclear about policies surrounding research advising, thesis panels, and more. Registration policies may or may not still be an issue, and should be clarified should there be any changes.*

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Proposed Solutions:

- Update information about research requirements, including more detailed information about thesis requirements in connection with requirements established by the Graduate School, *how to form the thesis committee*, and requirements for the thesis defense. In relation to the professional project, outline specific details of the project before students agree to commit to this research option.
- This new information should be reflected in the Student Handbook and on the AAD website where students receive most of their information.

CURRICULUM:

Concern summary: *Students have voiced that Research Design has repetitive elements from Research Proposal, and wonder if one of the courses isn't necessary or can be changed to better prepare students to enter their selected research routes. In addition, students voiced that Internship I, III may not need to be held in-person.*

Proposed Solutions:

- Either change or remove the requirement of Research Design, and make sure students are receiving lots of feedback in Research Proposal. The two classes are very similar as-is.
- Research Methods can be required in the first term and the program can offer Art and Society in another term.
- Provide students more information about what exactly the Professional Project will entail before they are required to sign on to that option. This goes for all the terminal research options.
- Hold Internship III as an online course or condense it into a 1-3 week class rather than lasting the whole term.

FUNDING & MEETING SPACE:

Concern summary: *Students have voiced their dissatisfaction about the separation between the two cohorts due to few Friday workshops, conferences or opportunities to get together outside of field trips. They have also noted the difficulty in completing group projects without a meeting space. They also see funding as a barrier to applying for internships they are interested in, and would like to have information about how to find funding, both for their time as students and afterward.*

Proposed Solutions:

- Locate or create some AAD student-only meeting space where students can sign up to reserve the room. This should be open to students several days a week.
- Provide a workshop or mini-class about how to find or secure funding so that more opportunities can open up to students, both during the program and after.