

ADVANCED DEGREE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

The Toronto School of Theology's (TST) Advanced Degree Students Association (ADSA) had another successful year and increased its services by about 60% from the previous year. For several years, the ADSA has been running two seminars, one on publishing and the other on applying for doctoral fellowships from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and for Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS). This year, the ADSA decided to host a monthly professional development seminar, which would include these and other topics that concern advanced degree students. This year the topics were: SSHRC/OGS, life post-masters, job interview skills, conferences and professional societies (with representatives from the Canadian Theological Society, Catholic Theological Society of America, Catholic Biblical Association of America, and Society of Biblical Literature), teaching tips, information technology (with representatives from the companies that publish *Nota Bene* and *Bible Works*), and publishing (with representatives from Eerdmans, Edwin Mellen, which are both publishers, and *Renaissance and Reformation*, a bilingual Canadian journal). The presenters all had special expertise in the area that they were asked to speak about and came from across North America. These events were very successful and rated highest in the evaluation of ADSA that students completed. However, it was decided that due to timing, some of the seminars were not as well attended as others and therefore, next year, there will only be four seminars, and ADSA will dedicate resources to cover some travel expenses and thus be able to bring in other experts.

Another major advancement for the ADSA was its partnership with the English Writing and Language Services (EWLS) of the University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies. This program granted advanced degree students access to its writing lab and classes. TST students used the services 30 times this year. In order to encourage students to use the services more often, the ADSA will promote the services and conduct a survey to ascertain students' needs in this area. According to ADSA's agreement with EWLS, the ADSA will also re-evaluate the relationship at the end of this year and hold a student referendum in order to determine the future of this arrangement.

This year, the ADSA continued "Works and Wine," an interdisciplinary seminar, and even increased its frequency so that it became a monthly event. However, there was great difficulty in finding presenters and there was also a very poor attendance. Therefore, the ADSA Board decided to cut this event back to once a semester and change the format in order to encourage greater participation and make it a more beneficial service.

The ADSA Board hosted three social events, one at the beginning of each semester and one at the end of the year in conjunction with its Annual General Meeting and election. These had high turnouts of both students and faculty and were the only place that the ADSA Board went over its budget.

In an effort to reach out to the larger university community, the ADSA established a sub-committee of three Board members to work directly with Lois Wilson, the Ecumenist-in-residence, to help her develop various projects. The Board members were specifically involved in her development of seminars on religion and public policy with Massey College. ADSA hopes

to continue this relationship next year and also expand the number of its collaborative events, both with Lois and others.

Following up on the request that was made of the ADSA Board in the responses to TST's strategic planning document last summer, the ADSA surveyed students regarding funding and funding issues within TST. A detailed report of the results was given to the TST Directors – first, David Neelands, and then, Alan Hayes – and then it was submitted to TST in September.

ADSA began a two-stage process of changing its constitution into two documents. Each change in the constitution requires a student referendum and so, this year, the ADSA Board brought the constitution up-to-date. Next year, the ADSA plans to use this base document to form the basis for both a true constitution and some by-laws. These will be brought to a referendum in October so that the ADSA membership may ratify it.

In evaluating its constitution and procedures, the ADSA Board had to ask questions about its function and services. It decided that the students should be surveyed to ask them to evaluate ADSA's performance and provide feedback about ADSA's events and services. The ADSA Board also used the survey as a referendum to approve an increase in the incidental fee per semester from \$3.50 to \$5.00 for full-time students and \$1.75 to \$2.50 for part-time students.

The ADSA has also committed to supporting two departmental seminars – Patristic and Biblical – and the Lonergan On the Edge conference annually. The ADSA will contribute \$50 to each of the seminars and \$100 to the conference each year. This year, the ADSA Board committed \$270 to the conference that students organized to discuss the works of John Howard Yoder after its conference planning committee made that request. The ADSA Board continued to offer travel grants to student conference presenters. It granted three awards of \$200 in each semester. By the end of the year, the ADSA Board was in the black with a balance of just under \$300.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen White
President, ADSA Board