

ADVANCED DEGREE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

2009–2010 marked the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Toronto School of Theology, and as per the mandate of the 2008–2009 board, during this academic year ADSA chose to dedicate most of its energy to organize a two-day international conference to celebrate the event. The conference, titled in honour of TST's mission, "Ecumenism and the Challenge of Pluralism: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue" was held on May 7–8, and was hosted by various member colleges. The event was highly successful, attracting a good number of TST students and faculty who responded with enthusiasm and encouraged ADSA to organize other conferences in the future.

The conference included an introductory address on the history and mission of the consortium presented by the Director of TST, Dr. Alan Hayes. A keynote address given by Dr. John McGuckin (The Ane Marie and Bent Emil Nielsen Professor in Late Antique and Byzantine Christian History at Union Theological Seminary, and Professor of Byzantine Christian Studies at Columbia University), and titled "The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Imperative," received accolades even from the general public, and set the tone for the almost thirty academic paper presentations held the following day. The papers ranged in topic from issues of Christianity and culture to ecclesiology to inter-religious dialogue to church history and were presented by established scholars and students from TST and beyond. The Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC), who organized its biennial meeting in conjunction with ADSA's conference, also presented four papers in two sessions on Mennonite theology and ecumenism. Conference presentations were concluded by a round-table discussion among Prof. Travis Kroeker (McMaster University), Prof. Ephraim Radner (Wycliffe College, TST), Dr. Alan Hayes (TST), and The Very Rev., The Hon. Lois Wilson (former TST ecumenist-in-residence) on "The Future of Theological Education."

ADSA wishes to thank the University of Toronto Student's Union (UTSU)'s board for its financial support of the event, TST's member colleges for graciously offering refreshments and the use of their premises, and the TST Director, Dr. Alan Hayes, for his overwhelming support and encouragement. A core group of TST doctoral students, who formed the TST Fortieth Anniversary Conference Committee that met regularly for more than a year, made the event possible through their dedication and hard work.

ADSA's service to its constituents continued with its monthly board meetings, and regular events and activities. ADSA Board members participated at TST's orientation, and served on various TST committees, and on the UTSU's board. In its role of advocacy for student concerns, ADSA voiced to the administration the students' plea for access to more study carrels at Robarts Library. ADSA is grateful for the work of the Library Committee who, on behalf of TST, negotiated for an additional five carrels (for a new total of 15 carrels), to be used by as many as 30 TST doctoral students.

The beginning-of-year-barbeque was well attended and students along with their families and friends engaged in friendly camaraderie with faculty and staff. The end-of-year-pizza party coincided with our AGM and attracted many members of the TST community.

The success of our Professional Development seminars continued to grow, and the three seminars had very strong and enthusiastic participation as students increasingly recognize the importance of these events for their professional development. The topics this year were: "Applying for SSHRC and OGS," "Easing the Burden of Academic Writing," and "An Insider's Guide to Finding an Academic Job." The two Works and Wine seminars were also highly successful. Faculty respondents to our student presentations continued to make the cross-departmental conversations interesting and engaging.

ADSA has also continued its support of students' academic initiatives on and off campus. Six students were each awarded a \$200 travel bursary for conference presentations outside the province of Ontario, and ADSA has renewed its support for TST student-run seminars such as the Patristics Seminar, the Liturgy Seminar, and the Biblical Seminar. Financially, at the end of the academic year ADSA was in the black.

Respectfully submitted,
Nadia Delicata
President, ADSA Board 2009--2010