

ADVANCED DEGREE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

For the past several years, the Advanced Degree Students' Association (ADSA) has focused its energy around one key event or issue for the academic year. For example, in 2009–2010 ADSA organized a highly successful ecumenical conference to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Toronto School of Theology. In 2008–2009, the University of Toronto Student Union (UTSU), of which TST students are members, mandated all students to purchase TTC passes. The widespread unpopularity of this proposal (mainly due to the high cost and the inability of students to “opt-out”) caused the ADSA to engage a series of lengthy conversations within the TST community and the broader University of Toronto community about which student union TST students should belong to (continuing with the UTSU or joining the Graduate Student Union). This past academic year, 2010–2011, ADSA did not have any one defining issue or project (the UTSU had a large turnover of personnel and there were no proposals that affected TST student fees). As a result, ADSA used the 2010–2011 academic year as a period of renewal and self-study.

The one major issue that was studied at length was that ADSA was asked to comment (on behalf of the TST student body) to the Advanced Degree Council on a series of proposals involving language requirements and theological coursework for the doctoral programs. After much internal discussion, and soliciting of advice from our constituents, ADSA: strongly supported the initiatives of the Historical Department to reduce the number of required languages in the PhD/ThD programs; and unanimously rejected the initiatives of the Historical Department to admit students into the PhD/ThD program without a theological background.

Otherwise, 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.

We tried a new format for the beginning-of-year-party, which was moved to the athletic field at Trinity College so that students could play ultimate Frisbee. On one hand, the party had a lower number of attendees than years past (possibly due to the new location). On the other hand, those who came were very happy with the new format. The end-of-year-pizza party coincided with our Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year we had live music at the event. The gathering was well attended as students, along with their families and friends, engaged in friendly camaraderie with faculty and staff.

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,” “Academic Publishing,” and “Teaching in a university vs. teaching in a seminary – a holistic approach.” Unfortunately, our Fall Works and Wine seminar was poorly attended, which caused us to suspend the program for the Spring Semester.

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. It is worth noting that over thirty applicants applied for these bursaries

(the highest amount ever), which speaks to the high caliber of our TST students who are presenting at conferences throughout North America and Europe. ADSA has also 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 carried over a small surplus.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Baltutis
President, ADSA Board 2010-2011