

ADVANCED DEGREE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

This past year saw a marked increase in interest regarding the Advanced Degree Students' Association (ADSA) Board, the governing body of the ADSA. The Board grew from six or seven members in 2010-2011 to fourteen in 2011-2012, leaving no vacant positions for the first time in the recent memory of the ADSA. This increase in membership brought with it a new diversity of opinion, a diversity that occasioned some conflict but also a welcome sense of excitement in ADSA affairs. The ADSA Board admirably fulfilled its mandate to represent student concerns to the TST administration and provide opportunities for students to interact socially and develop academically.

ADSA sent student representatives to sit on the Advanced Degree Council, the TST Board of Trustees, the Library Committee, and various departmental committees. This year the hot issue with respect to the TST administration seems to have been the Board of Trustees' talks of streamlining its governance structure by, among other things, removing student representatives as voting members. Student concerns were expressed to the TST Board and to Dr. Hayes in particular who kindly agreed to attend an ADSA Board meeting to explain the TST Board's thinking. The ADSA is currently awaiting a formal proposal from the TST in order to formulate a detailed response.

ADSA also took time to have fun and build camaraderie. The usual beginning and end of year socials were well attended, and a few other socials were also organized, though attendance at mid-term social events continues to be low. Many ADSA members live off campus, study part-time, or tend to stay at their individual colleges. With these challenges in mind, some new community building initiatives were undertaken this year. The ADSA Board began a visioning process with respect to its website, launched a Facebook page, and purchased a number of custom embroidered TST crests to hand out to its constituents. The ADSA Board continues to consider ways to unite its diffuse membership.

Opportunities for academic development were provided to the ADSA in the form of seminars and bursaries, as usual. Four professional development seminars were organized over the course of the year: on applying for grants, theological blogging, publishing in journals, and becoming formally involved in ecumenical dialogue. "Works and Wine," an annual and often poorly attended series of seminars was this year re-imagined as a larger conference-style event. Significant interest was expressed in the proposal, and members of the ADSA worked diligently to bring it to fruition. Unfortunately, problems with paper submission deadlines and respondents caused the organisers to cancel the event, which may yet occur next year. On a brighter note, the ADSA Board found room in its budget to award nine travel bursaries of two-hundred dollars each to students presenting at conferences outside of Ontario. It was a pleasure to support the work of some of our very active members.

Interest in ADSA governance has remained high. ADSA was well served in 2011-2012 and promises to be similarly served by a strong Board in 2012-2013.

Respectfully submitted,
David Boehmer
President, ADSA Board 2011-2012