

UW-Madison Physics Graduate Student Council

Planning Meeting 1, 4/5/2018

What led to the idea of a council?

- Women and Gender Minorities in Physics (GMaWiP), formed 2015, used federal data highlighting low percentage of women in our department to **motivate recommendations to the department**
- Began meeting with the department chair in 2016 to discuss issues
- Three key recommendations in 2017:
 - **Modify the qual**
 - **Implement a mentoring program**
 - **Increase transparency**
- Met with Prof. Dasu and other faculty and the idea of a grad student council was recommended because these are issues that affect all students

What led to the idea of a council?

- November 2017: Chair, co-chair, other faculty members attended The Qual Forum where **students provided questions and feedback** on the qual
- Lots of questions were answered, and feedback led to changes!
- Other observations from the forum:
 - The faculty were painfully unaware of many aspects of the qual
 - Once they were made aware, changes happened
 - A lot of students had a lot of things to say about the qual

What led to the idea of a council?

- March 2018: as promised, chair hosts another open forum
- Things discussed:
 - Recent administrative staff departures
 - What's taking so long to replace them? How much longer will it take?
 - What exactly were their roles? Who is taking over those roles in the meantime?
 - **Grad student handbook way out of date**
 - Recent changes in grad student pay and seg fees
 - Lack of non-academic career development events
 - Lack of explicit means of communication between students and faculty besides advisors
 - **Mentoring program**/"committee of three"
 - **Grad student council** to informally support grad students on issues where the faculty are dropping the ball, and to provide feedback to faculty when needed

Other top programs w/ phys. grad. student councils

- MIT (<https://physics-gsc.scripts.mit.edu/home/>)
- Caltech (<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~pgsi/>)
- Harvard (<https://www.physics.harvard.edu/gradcouncil>)
- UC-Berkeley (<https://callink.berkeley.edu/organization/gaphysicsgraduatestudentassociation>)
- U of. Illinois (<https://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/student-organizations>)
- Michigan (<https://maizepages.umich.edu/organization/physics-grad-council>)
- Maryland (<https://umdpysics.umd.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-student-committee.html>)
- UC San Diego (http://pgc.ucsd.edu/index.php/Welcome_to_the_PGC)
- Washington (<https://sharepoint.washington.edu/phys/grad/Pages/PGSC.aspx>)
- Ohio State (<http://pgsc.physics.osu.edu/>)
- SUNY (<http://grad.physics.sunysb.edu/PGSA/>)
- Northwestern (<https://sites.northwestern.edu/pagsc/>)

Example council goals from other universities

- **Community development**
 - cookie time, picnics, prospective student visits, lunch with faculty members, etc.
- **Professional development**
 - request certain speakers, organize contact between current and former students
- **Informally advise fellow students**
 - valuable instructors, qual/prelim/thesis tips, how to join a research group, who has funding, etc.
- **Coordinate outreach**
- **Liaison between students and faculty**

Example council accomplishments

- Organizing intramural sports teams
- Awarded \$2400 by grad student association for grad lounge renovation
- Regular informal meetings between grad students and department chair and other faculty
- Weekly informal research talks by and for grad students
- Advocating for changes to department requirements

What do *you* want the goals
of the physics grad council
at UW-Madison to be?

Structure of other physics grad councils

MIT

- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Cookie/pie social chair
- Friday social chair
- Faculty Breakfast Organizer
- Physics Athletic chair
- Webmaster

Northwestern

- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Curriculum
- Diversity & Inclusion
- International Students
- Master's Students
- Outreach
- Quality of Life
- Teaching Assistants

Harvard

- President
- 5 council members

Berkeley

- President
- 12 board members

UC - San Diego

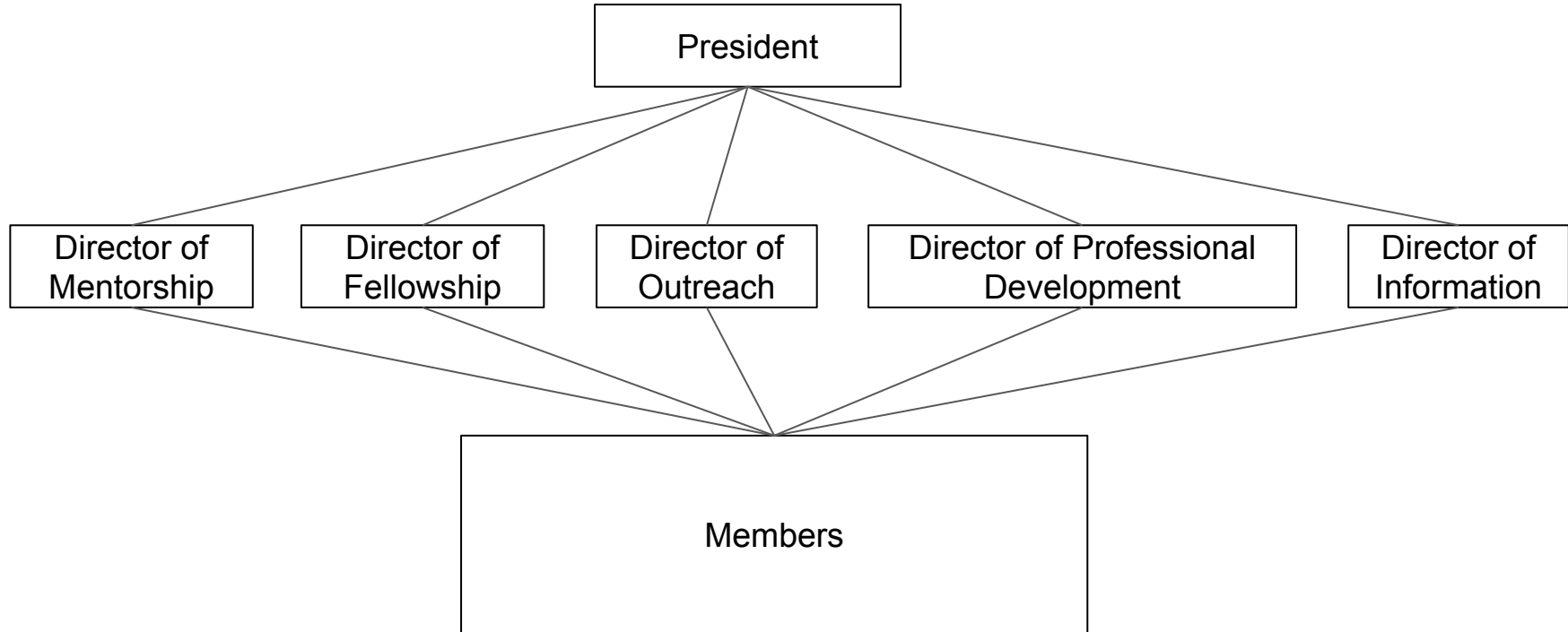
- 2 members per year

Illinois

- 2 co-presidents
- Treasurer
- Webmaster
- Historian

Structure of UW-Madison GMaWiP

(Women and Gender Minorities in Physics)



What kinds of positions do you think are necessary to achieve these goals?

Timetable moving forward

- Last week of class: April 30 - May 4
- Finals: May 7-11
- TA training starts end of August

What type of timescale do
you think is reasonable?

i.e. when should elections be, etc.