

**Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus Meeting Minutes (draft until approved)
September 18, 2012 – 4:30 to 5:30 PM, 7000 level lounge**



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

September 18, 2012 – 4:30 to 5:30 PM

In Attendance: Lindsay Davidson (Chair), Amanda Kissel (Associate Chair), Emily McAuley (Secretary), Sebastian Ibarra (Events Committee Officer), Catherine Scott (Events Committee Officer), Corinna Lichota (Treasurer), Leslie Saunders (TSSU Steward), Franz Simon (Webmaster), Lindsey Button (Member at Large), Julie Wray (GSS alternate), Janie Dubman (International Student Representative), Cassandra Carroll, Brett Favaro, Jen Scholefield, Emma Leach, Grant Olson, Mohamed Sheriffdeen, Noel Swain.

Absent: Jenny Linton (Faculty Mole), Kyle Artelle (DSC Representative), Rob Greenland (GSS Representative), Tanya Stemberger (Events Committee Officer), Michael Beakes (DGSC Representative).

1. **Welcome** – Meeting called to order at 4:31 pm by Lindsay.
 - a. Attendance
 - b. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Grad Olympiad – Lindsay
 - ii. Weekly Beers Events – Brett
 - iii. Halloween Event – Sebastian & Catherine
 - iv. Welcome BBQ - Sebastian
 - v. Departmental Meeting Updates – Lindsay for Jenny Linton
 - vi. Webmaster Update – Franz
 - c. Motion to approve minutes from last month's meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the August 23, 2012 Biological Sciences graduate caucus meeting.

Motioned by: Catherine Scott

Seconded by: Franz Simon

Decision: **motion carries unanimously**

2. **Grad hosted speaker** – Lindsay
 - a. Felix has committed to contribute \$1500.
 - b. Nancy Baron is available (for a one-day visit only, e.g. a few hours for one-on-ones, lunch, talk, Club Ilia). Therefore, she wouldn't be present at the Olympiad on a separate day as a judge (which means we can be more flexible with the Olympiad date). She is also flexible on her speaker fee. We asked her to reduce it to \$1000. In order for her to have that approved, we need to officially invite her.

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- c. This year's grad hosted speaker event will cost more than last year's only due to us having to pay for her flights (from/to Santa Barbara). Also, we don't need to pay for a hotel for her (she can make other arrangements). The event will cost the BISC Grad Caucus \$1000 at the most (this is an over-estimate). Outside sources will pay for the rest. Plus if we sell alcohol we can recoup some losses (~\$200).

Motion to budget up to \$1000 from the Biological Sciences Grad Caucus Trust Account to host Nancy Baron as this year's grad hosted speaker.

Moved by: Emily McAuley

Seconded by: Sebastian Ibarra

Decision: **motion carries with 16 in favour, 2 objections, and 0 abstentions**

3. Grad Olympiad (~March if after Nancy Baron) – Lindsay

- a. Call for volunteers to reformat grad Olympiad: Sebastian, Lindsey
- b. Suggestions:
 - i. Change to a more serious format due to big name speakers and the fact that the Christmas party is more informal, so we could have a more formal event. This includes a strong emphasis on communicating the research programs of each lab.
 - ii. Have each lab make a message box (a technique described in Nancy Baron's book).

4. Weekly Beers Events – Brett

- a. No progress, no replies to e-mails.

5. Halloween event – Sebastian & Catherine

- a. Looking for help, or even people to take charge.
 - i. Volunteers: Cassandra
 - ii. Committee to send out an e-mail asking for help.
- b. Last year's event was fairly well-attended. It consisted of a BBQ, pumpkin carving, a movie, and an informal gathering at the pub afterwards. The movie was least well-attended – movie choice should be made carefully this year in order to attract interest.

6. Welcome BBQ – Sebastian

- a. BISC grad students attended the Highland Pub for drinks after the Welcome BBQ. Sebastian needs to be reimbursed for this.

Motion to reimburse Sebastian Ibarra \$193.02 from the Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus Core Account for drinks purchased at the Highland Pub for Biological Sciences graduate students as part of the Biological Sciences Fall Welcome BBQ held on September 6, 2012.

Motioned by: Brett Favaro

Seconded by: Franz Simon

Decision: **motion carries unanimously**

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7. Departmental Meeting Updates – Lindsay for Jenny Linton

- a. INSPIRE (Innovative Science Programs Integrating Research and Education) is a \$2 million program launched by the Dean of Science to develop department and faculty wide programming to improve five areas of teaching in Science, one of which includes graduate student courses. If you have suggestions, talk to Felix or your supervisor. They are thinking BIG and the more departments that are involved, the more likely they are to be considered and implemented. It is a one-time fund but it can be spread out over a couple of years for one or a few selected projects. The deadline for project ideas is October 31, 2012 and must go through a faculty member and be submitted online at:
<http://www.sfu.ca/science/inspire/news/2012/Sept 5.html>
- b. There have been updates made to the MPM program descriptions, course titles and required courses. See the course calendar for changes.
- c. Finally, the Biology Department is undergoing a five-year review and there will be a site visit from the external review panel next semester. The review panel will want to meet with graduate students to hear about what we feel is and is not working in the department and what areas need improvement, including structural needs (e.g. updating B9242 or creating a new, bigger meeting space). Meeting date TBA.

8. Webmaster Update – Franz

- a. We have a website (<http://biscgrads.blogspot.ca/>) – Includes minutes from past caucus meetings, among other things.
- b. We also have a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2541902675>) – However, it has been inactive since 2008. We should start this up again.

9. Committee updates

- a. DGSC – Absent
- b. DSC – Absent
- c. GSS – Absent
- d. Faculty Mole – Absent
- e. TSSU – Leslie
 - i. TSSU and SFU are still undergoing mediation. No agreement has been reached. Mediation has been extended (some occurred during August and September). The deadline for the strike (90 days) has been extended to December 2012.
 - ii. There is a TSSU General Membership meeting September 19, 2012 from 4:30-6:30 pm in the Maggie Benston Centre Room 2290/2292 (with free food!) to discuss bargaining issues.

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- iii. Main issues (two years of bargaining – all outlined on TSSU website (<http://www.tssu.ca/>):
 - 1. Sessional instructors – Want to add a seniority structure (not currently in place).
 - 2. Create centralized posting system for TAs that would incorporate a priority system (e.g. within department over outside department, graduate over undergraduate, unfunded over funded).
 - 3. Updates to health & safety.

10. Adjournment

Motion to end this September 18, 2012 Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus meeting.

Motioned by: Lindsay Davidson

Seconded by: Sebastian Ibarra

Decision: **motion carries unanimously**