

Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus Meeting Agenda (draft until approved)

December 11th, 2012 – 4:30 to 5:30 PM, 7000 level lounge



Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus

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In Attendance: Lindsay Davidson (Chair), Amanda Kissel (Associate Chair), Emily McAuley (Secretary), Sebastian Ibarra (Events Committee Officer), Janie Dubman (International Student Representative), Franz Simon (Webmaster), Lindsey Button (Member at Large), Rob Greenland (GSS Representative), Julie Wray (GSS Alternate), Jay Brogan (TSSU Steward), Jen Scholefield, Emma Leach.

Absent: Corinna Lichota (Treasurer), Catherine Scott (Events Committee Officer/TSSU Steward), Kyle Artelle (DSC Representative), Jenny Linton (Faculty Mole), Leslie Saunders (TSSU Steward), Tanya Stemberger (Events Committee Officer), Mike Beakes (DGSC Representative), Mohamed Sherifdeen (TSSU Steward).

- a. **Welcome** – Meeting was called to order at 4:30 by Lindsay
- b. Attendance
- c. Additions to Agenda
 - i. Biology grad website
 - ii. Reimbursements Winterfest party
 - iii. Professional pest managers association of BC
- d. Motion to approve minutes from last month's meetings.

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 20th, 2012 Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus meeting.

Moved by: Franz Simon

Seconded by: Sebastian Ibarra

Decision: **motion carries unanimously**

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 22nd, 2012 Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus special meeting.

Moved by: Lindsey Button

Seconded by: Julie Wray

Decision: **motion carries unanimously**

2. Winterfest reimbursements – Lindsay

- a. None required!

3. Biology grad website – Elizabeth Elle

- a. Biology grads have two web spaces:
 - i. http://www.sfu.ca/biology/grad_caucus/about.html
 - ii. <http://biscgrads.blogspot.ca/>

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- b. Recently student/faculty expectations were ready to be posted, but were posted in wrong location. In correcting this, other problems with the site were noticed (and resolved):
 - i. Link to grad caucus has been added
 - ii. Outdated links
- c. Any other problems will be fixed by the department (Dave Carmean, carmean@sfu.ca – broken links; Barb Sherman, barbaras@sfu.ca – content)
 - i. Or contact Lindsay Davidson (lindsay_davidson@sfu.ca) or Elizabeth Elle (elle@sfu.ca)
- d. Departmental external review upcoming
 - i. Grad student satisfaction survey = average of “C+”
 - ii. How do we fix this? Suggestions welcome now and over the next few months
 - iii. Department very fragmented (lots of labs don’t interact)
 - 1. Would a new meeting location help? Would people actually use it?
 - 2. What about a within-department conference? That was the original purpose of the Grad Olympiad, but no longer is. Maybe if we revamp it, or have a separate event for this purpose.
 - 3. Department is somewhat split up by “topic” (e.g. ecology, cell biology, toxicology). Perhaps a solution would be to approach each group separately and encourage everyone to intermingle.
 - iv. SFU accepts students in any term of the year, so information provided to incoming students varies greatly. Raise “Guidance” satisfaction rating by making sure all incoming students have access to same information.
 - 1. Also, incoming student events are pretty good at encouraging students to meet other students, but not faculty. There should be opportunities to casually interact with faculty as well.
 - v. Some students are not making the minimum annual stipend and aren’t comfortable approaching anyone about it, or aren’t even aware of the fact that they should be making more (e.g. a student with TAsip that doesn’t meet the minimum should be topped up by their supervisor).
 - vi. People you can talk to:
 - 1. Julian Guttman – DGSC Chair for BISC (jguttman@sfu.ca)
 - 2. GSS Graduate Advocate (<http://sfugradsociety.ca/2012/03/210.html>)

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4. Professional pest managers of BC – Sebastian

- a. Annual meeting.
- b. One day event. February 25 2013 in IRMACs
- c. Looking for sponsorship – grad caucus interested? ~\$100. Money would go towards food, coffee, catering, IRMACs. They are also asking the department for money. GSS unlikely to fund.
 - i. Is it applicable to everyone? Is it open to anyone?
 - ii. It is open to the public. There will be a guest speaker. Free food, free admission. Opportunities to mingle with attendees, faculty, students. eBERG is participating.
- d. To be voted on at next meeting.

5. Treasury update – Lindsay for Corinna

- a. Application to GSS for Nancy Baron rejected due to “unrealistic” budget (too low, they have encouraged us to apply for more). We have now applied for \$750.

6. Committee updates

- a. DGSC – Absent
- b. DSC – Absent
- c. GSS – Rob
 - i. Think Again Conference (SFU) – Grad students only conference. Just had second conference in November. Attendance was very low. How to improve? Is the Fall or Spring term in the future? Right now it is very broad, maybe it should not be university-wide (although the original idea was to bring the whole university together). Suggestions are welcome!
- d. TSSU – Leslie
 - i. Collective agreement has been ratified. Get the details as www.tssu.ca. Get your strike pay at AQ 5219.
- e. Faculty Mole – Absent

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn this December 11th, 2012 meeting of the Biological Sciences Graduate Caucus at 5:25 pm.

Moved by: Rob Greenland

Seconded by: Lindsey Button

Decision: **motion carries unanimously**