

BISC Grad Caucus Meeting Minutes

24 October 2003

In Attendance: Katrina Salvante, Andrea Pomeroy, Michelle Morrow, Jonathan Stecyk, BriAnne Addison, Joline King, Jeanine Bond, Dawn Cooper, Raul Ursic, Amanda Niehaus, Brian Ma, Shelly Hoover, Suzanne Gray, Jeremy Parker, Dana Seaman, Jeff Ball

1. GF policy issue:

- Shelly Hoover reported that the Department Scholarship Committee put forward a motion at the last faculty meeting reiterating the department's policy that a GF cannot be held in the same semester as a major award. This motion passed by a large majority.
- A motion was put forth by Andrea, seconded by Michelle and passed unanimously that the student DSC representative should send a letter to the Dean stating the student's position against any proposed changes.

2. Back-up DSC student representative:

- To increase student involvement and representation on the scholarship committee a motion was passed last meeting for a back-up position. Jeff outlined the requirements and Dawn and Jonathan described their interest in holding this position. Attendees voted by secret ballot 9 to 6 in favour of Jonathan.

3. Course evaluation:

- The DGSC is looking for grad student feedback regarding courses taken. In particular, they would like suggestion about changes that could be made, or new topics that could be added to the curriculum. Responses can be sent to Shelly (shelly_hoover@sfu.ca) or Joline (joline_king@sfu.ca).

4. Student positions on faculty hiring committee:

- The search committee will be reviewing applications during December to February for as many as four positions. Two student positions sharing a single vote have been approved.
- Andrea will send an email to bisc-grads outlining what the positions entail. Interested individuals or duos should send a one-paragraph statement to Andrea (apomeroy@sfu.ca) addressing their ability to judge the candidates' research quality and potential, and their ability to communicate and to evaluate following graduate student interests.
- These statements will go out to bisc-grads to be ranked and the results will be forwarded to Tony Williams for final approval.

5. Christmas party:

- To be held on 12 December. Interested volunteers should contact Joline (joline_king@sfu.ca).

6. Payday coffee social:

- The department Collegiality Committee is starting a payday coffee social starting this Friday, 31 October at 10 am outside the biological sciences main office. Everyone is invited to attend and are encouraged to bring goodies to share.

7. NSERC travel grants:

- The current method of awarding travel grants, first come first served with the written acceptance of an abstract, disadvantages students that plan on attending conferences later in the term. The DGSC is considering ways of improving the fairness of the process.

8. Ph.D. external examiner:

- There are a number of little known terms and guidelines that apply when searching for an external examiner. These are going to be placed on the biology web page for student reference.

9. Supervisor evaluation for departing students:

- As no one expressed interest about tackling this position, caucus members are going to congregate at the pub on 30 October, 2:30 pm to develop the questionnaire. Anyone interested in being involved should come out with ideas.
- Andrea made a motion to add the responsibility of keeping the questionnaire to the portfolio of the secretary. This was seconded by Katrina and passed unanimously.
- Jeff will look into having the questionnaire made into a PDF which will be passed out electronically to departing students each term.

10. Report on GIC activities:

- The university is in the midst of changing its computer system and its method of assessing fees. Those students that boycotted the tuition increase will be assessed penalties. In addition, there will no longer be a part-time status

11. Report on TSSU issues:

- The current contract ends in April, 2004. Members are encouraged to get involved and raise those issues they believe are important. The TSSU is looking for volunteers for various positions, and in particular individuals interested in serving on the contract committee. Contact Michelle (mmorrow@sfu.ca).

12. Graduate student symposium:

- The caucus has put out the call for volunteers to help organize this year's symposium to be held in the spring of 2004. Positions include acquiring funding, logistics, advertising, food, drinks, and others. Brian and Andrea both have Smartserv to cover bartending needs. Contact Allison Henderson (allison_henderson@sfu.ca) if interested.

13. Social committee report:

- The social committee is looking for a generous individual with a house that would be willing to host a keg party. All proceeds will go to a scholarship fund that will be awarded annually to someone holding a non-paid student position. Contact Brian (Brian_Ma@sfu.ca) if you can help out.